

DISCOURSES  
ON THE  
*Being of a God,*

AND THE  
Immortality of the Soul ;  
OF THE  
Weakness of Man ;

And concerning the Way of  
*Preserving Peace with Men :*

Being some of the E S S A Y S  
written in *French* by Messieurs  
du P O R T R O Y A L.

Render'd into *English* by the late  
JOHN LOCK, *Gent.*

L O N D O N :  
Printed and Sold by J. Downing in Bartho-  
lomew-Close near West-Smithfield, 1712.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**O *satisfie the Reader that the following Translation was made by Mr. LOCK, tho' not Publish'd by his Executors, I think it necessary to acquaint him; That Mr. LOCK once intended to have rendred into English all the Port Royal Essays; but when he had Translated these, he was inform'd that they were done by another hand, so he desisted, and presented and dedicated what he had done in Manuscript to the late Countess of Shaftsbury; who transcrib'd them with her own Hand, and gave them to a Friend, as a Token of the great Esteem she had for her. From this Copy it is that they are now printed; but the Countess's great*  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

*Humility would not suffer her to transcribe the Dedication, which is the Reason why that is not publish'd with them.*

*Those who think fit to compare this Translation with the other, will be ready to wish that Mr. Lock had gone through the whole. And as to the Publication of them, I presume the Suitableness of the Subjects treated of therein, to the present Times, will be a sufficient Apology.*

Farewel.

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# DISCOURSE I.

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*Containing in short the natural Proof  
of the Existence of a GOD, and  
the Immortality of the Soul.*

I.

**T**H E vicious and debauched Part of Man striking at the very Foundations of Religion, have thought it the shortest way to invalidate at once all the Proofs that are to be found in holy Writ, by denying the Being of a Deity, and the Immortality of the Soul; which hath made those of the contrary Party to have recourse to Natural Reason, and to fetch Arguments from such common Principles as could not be denied by their Adversaries.

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II.

## II.

Some to this Purpose have endeavoured to establish these Two great Points upon more refined Reasonings, and the Subtelties of Metaphysicks. Others, following a more plain and popular way, have drawn their Arguments from the Consideration of Nature, and the Order of Things visible in the World, which, like a great Book, lies continually open, and legible to all Mankind.

## III.

I confess these are not the fittest Means to bring into the true Religion those who are so unhappy as to be Strangers to it. Prophecies and Miracles, that evince the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures, are much more likely to prevail upon the Persuasions of Men, over-weaning in their Opinions; But I am likewise satisfied, that these natural Proofs want not their Solidity; and being suited to some Mens Understandings, ought not to be neglected.

## IV.

## IV.

There are, as I have said, some of these Arguments high abstract and metaphysical ; which, I judge, it is not discrete that any one should take Delight to oppose, or endeavour to confute. But there are others, that lie nearer our Senses, more conformable to Humane Reason, and level to the Capacity of Mankind, and such as a Man must do Violence to himself in resisting. These are they I design to point out in this Discourse.

## V.

What Pains soever Atheists take to rase out of the Minds of Men that general Apprehension of a Deity, which the very View of the World naturally imprints there, they have not been able to extirpate, or wholly efface those Characters that are stamped so clear, and are sunk so deep. If it be not an invincible Ratiocination, 'tis a Perception within us ; 'tis a kind of Intuition, not less forcible, not less convincing than all our Reasoning

soning together. There needs no Constraint to make us yield to it; we must do Violence to our selves if we oppose it.

## VI.

Reason, to discover one God, Creator of all things, we see, has no more to do, but to suffer its self to follow its own natural Motion, when it considers the regular Courses of those vast Bodies that move above us: The Progress of Nature in an Order never disturb'd: The admirable Connexion of all the Parts that sustain each other, and could not subsist without the mutual Aid they afford one to another: The Variety of Stones, Minerals, and Plants: The wonderful Contrivance of the Bodies of Animals; their Generation, Production, Growth, and Death. It is impossible that Reason, contemplating all these Wonders, should not hear this secret Voice, that all this is not the Effect of Chance; but the Production of some Cause, which possesses in it self all the Perfections which we observe in this most excellent Piece of Workmanship.

## VII.



## VII.

It would be a vain Attempt to endeavour to give an Account of all the Contrivances of this wonderful Machin: Of the various Wheels and Movements in it; by saying that all was nothing but one great Mass of Matter, of a vast Extent, rang'd into this goodly Order by a proportionable Motion. Since the Difficulty is not thereby removed, but will still remain till the Original of this Matter and this Motion be made out; which will be very hard to do, without having recourse to an immaterial intelligent Agent, who at first produced, and continues to preserve both the one and the other.

## VIII.

What Reason can there be to conceive this dull and insensible Lump, we call Matter, Eternal, and without Beginning? Is it not evident, that there is not any thing in it that can be imagin'd to contribute in the least towards its Existence; and that it is

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extreamly absurd to ascribe to the vilest and most contemptible of all Beings, the highest of all Perfections, which is, to be of it self. I perceive my self to be something beyond Comparison more excellent than Matter: I know it, and it knows nothing of me; but with all this, I know and find at the same Time, that I have not been from Eternity. It follows then, that Matter, as well as I, must needs have been produced by some Cause; which, since it could not possibly be Matter, can be no other but that immaterial, omnipotent Principle, we are seeking after.

## IX.

Now if it be ridiculous to imagin Matter to subsist of it self from all Eternity, without Cause and without Production, it is much more so, to suppose Motion uncreated and eternal; since it is plain, that Matter hath in it self no Principle of Motion. It is capable indeed of receiving it from without, but cannot possibly give Motion to its self. All that it has, is from some extrinsical Communication; and  
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when that which it has once ceases, it will, if let alone, remain in Everlasting Rest.

## X.

Whence then has this great Motion which we find actuating the several Parts of the Universe, had its Original ; since 'tis clear it springs not from Matter, nor hath any stable and indissoluble Connexion with it ; but in a continual Change, is perpetually fleeting from one Part of it to another ? Must this Accident also pass for an Eternal Being, subsisting of its self ? Is it not much more reasonable, since it could not be without a Cause, and that Cause could not be Matter, to acknowledge it the Product of some spiritual Being ?

## XI.

If such a Principle be necessary to the Production of Matter, it is no less necessary to its Regulation : And there needs some wise Agent, to direct and proportion it so, as may best serve to preserve the Frame of the Universe ;



without which it would throw all into Disorder and Confusion ; for then it may be supposed, that this Motion which fashions, orders and dissolves all Bodies is, in infinite Space, infinite ; yet nevertheless it is clear, that in the several Parts of the Universe, it is finite and determinate ; and that if it were either greater or less in this our visible World, it would instantly change the Face of all things, and wholly overturn this admirable Building. Who then hath fixt it in its due Proportion, and in that infinity of Degrees it is capable of ? How came it to light upon that only one, which just served to produce this beautiful Order ? Matter in its self is indifferent to all the several Degrees of Motion, and would easily admit a less, or a greater ; either of which would totally dissolve this goodly Frame, and turn the World into Destruction ; who then found out, and fixt it in this just Temper ? Will any one say, it was Chance ? It is possible indeed to say it ; but I should think impossible seriously to mean it.



## XII.

But besides Matter and Motion, there are thinking Beings, which we meet with in the World; we are certain we our selves think, and cannot doubt it of other Men; this Observation leads us most directly to the Discovery of the Immortality of our Souls, and so to the Knowledge of their Maker.

## XIII.

Whosoever will consider Matter, must needs acknowledge, that knead and order it as you will, it is impossible, by any shuffling, or Disposition of the Parts, to make that ever know it self which before did not; and that one shall ever be able, by jumbling and moving the Particles of this dull insensible Mass, of a sudden to give it Life, Sense, and Understanding. Our Reason sees few things clearer, than it doth the Impossibility, that Matter should think, or reflect upon it self.

## XIV.

Hence it follows, that since it is certain, that we think, there must needs be some Being in us which is not Matter, but is really distinct from it. What then shall be able to destroy this thinking Being? Or, why must it perish, being separate from Matter, more than Matter in its Separation from it?

## XV.

The Annihilation of any thing is to us inconceiveable, our Reason is directly against it, and Nature affords us not one Example of it. Why then should we do Violence to our Reason and our Imagination, to remove these thinking Beings out of the common State of all other things, which, having once got Existence, never sink again into Nothing? Why should we apprehend the Annihilation of our Souls, which are infinitely nobler than our Bodies; when we have no such Apprehension of any one Body whatsoever?

## XVI.

## XVI.

If then it be past doubt, that there are thinking Beings in the World, which are not Bodies, nor eternal; where shall we find their Original? It cannot be in Matter; which having nothing of Spirit, cannot produce one. It cannot be in another Spirit of the same kind, *i. e.* the Soul of the Father cannot produce that of the Child. For how can a Spirit make out of Nothing, another Spirit, which hath Thoughts and Inclinations different from its own, and oftentimes quite contrary? If one Soul produced another, it would do it by Thinking: It would be sensible of this Power in its self, and perceive the Effects of it. But yet, who ever observed any such thing in themselves? *I know not how you began to appear in my Womb*, says the Mother of the *Macha-bees* to her Children: And all Mothers may say the same. 'Tis evident that their Wills and Understandings contribute Nothing to this admirable Workmanship which is formed in them; since it often happens, that a  
Child

Child is fashioned, and a living Soul produced in them, even when their Thoughts and Wills are set against it.

## XVII.

Whatsoever then we meet with in the World, leads us to the Knowledge of the Creator of the World. Matter, Motion, Spirit, all these things cry with one very intelligible Voice, That God is their Maker: *He hath made us, and not we our selves.*

## XVIII.

It hath pleased Him, as a Caution against that impious Thought, that the World is eternal, to leave upon it very large and legible Characters, to shew us that its Duration hath not been of any long Continuance; at least in that State it now is in; and without which neither Men, nor any other Animals, could subsist. Whence it follows, that Men and Beasts are but new things: Which is sufficient to prove the Existence of their Creator.

## XIX.

## XIX.

For we observe not any natural Cause, sufficient to raise high Mountains, and hollow Vallies, big enough to receive the Waters of the Sea. In all the Histories of the World, we find no Record of one new Mountain that hath started up; the Winds, 'tis true, in some Parts, make sometimes little Hillocks of Sand, which yet never reach to any considerable heighth, and are often destroyed even whilst they are raising. Earthquakes, that make the greatest Bustles and Changes, never were heard to have made high Mountains in any Part whatsoever; he that fancies Mountains to be raised thus, builds Castles in the Air, and relies upon an Hypothesis, to which Experience allows no Foundation. The Mountains then lessening sensibly every Day, and the Rain washing down some Part of them into the Vallies, they could not last, as they are, a whole Eternity: but the Hills would, in a certain Tract of Time, have been worn down, and the Vallies filled up; and so the whole  
Earth,



Earth, if it had been eternal, would long ere this have been brought to a Level; the least continual sensible Diminution whatsoever, being sufficient, in the infinite Duration of Eternity, to bring to Nothing an infinite Number of vast Mountains one after another.

## XX.

'Tis plain then, one cannot suppose the World eternal in the Condition it now is, *i. e.* wherein one Part of the Earth is elevated, and dry; and the other low, and covered with Water. The ordinary Course of natural Causes hath a Tendency to destroy it, and bring all the Earth under Water; in which State Mankind could have no Subsistence. The whole Race of Men would, without doubt, perish, were there no dry Land; both Men and Beasts then are certainly not eternal. There was a Time, when they all began, and one may, by a certain Succession of Years, trace them to the very Source of their first Original.

## XXI.



## XXI.

Who then shall be the Author; what the Cause of Man? We find Nothing in Nature able to undertake such a Piece of Workmanship. It has never been heard, that Man hath been produced, in any other than ordinary Ways and Course of Nature.

## XXII.

It is even more than probable that Matter, under no other Conduct but the ordinary Motion that is in the World, would never produce a Lion, if that whole Species were extinct; no more than it produces Wolves in *England*, since the Time they have been all destroy'd there.

## XXIII.

At least, it is certain, that Motion and Matter would never produce a Spirit, as hath been already proved; and that Matter being void of Thought, can never come to have Perception by any Change of Texture.  
So

So that it being past doubt, that the Race of Man is but a new thing in the World ; and that all the natural Power of corporal Beings is unable to produce a Man: It follows, that Mankind, not being eternal, must have been made by some Being more powerful than *Nature*.

## XXIV.

Besides, all Arts and humane Inventions are new things, they carry yet with them plain Marks of their Non-age, and clearly disown Eternity. We find nothing in the World, that may make us think it older than the holy Scripture says. There is no Historian above 4000 Years back. And if you observe the constant Progress of the World, from thence downwards ; it will appear just parallel to the Life of a Man ; growing up from his Infancy, and passing through his other Ages.

## XXV.

*Varro* witnesseth, that none of the Arts of his Time were of above a Thousand

thousand Years standing. Progress hath been daily made in new Discoveries for the Relief of our Necessities. And proportionably as one looks farther back, one finds both Arts and Men in a worse Condition. There are scarce any of the Arts or Sciences, scarce a Common-wealth, Empire, or Town, whereof we do not know the Original.

## XXVI.

I confess, there is a certain Author, who hath publish'd a Collection of the new Inventions found in these later Ages, and of several of former Times, that have been lost, under this Title, *Vetera deperdita, nova reperta*. But one may observe, in that very Book, that those old ones were of no very great Use; and such, whose Loss hath, with Advantage, been made up by later Inventions of better Contrivance. In-  
somuch that the Discoveries that have been made of late, are so useful, that 'tis impossible they should ever be lost; and so easie, that 'tis strange the World should be so long in finding them.

## XXVII.

## XXVII.

For Instance: What is there of greater Convenience to the Life of Man, than to know how to set the Wind and Water at work about our Business? The greatest Part of what is done at present in the World, is by the borrowed Force of these Two great Agents. The least Insight into Machaniques seems naturally to teach one, how to make this Use of them; since Men now seek but for Force, of which the Application is always easie.

## XXVIII.

One may boldly say, that Men will never be so simple, to put themselves again into a Necessity of doing that by their own Labour, which now they so easily dispatch, by the Help of Wind and Water. So that the Invention of Mills can never be lost. And yet this Engine, as useful as it is, is not very ancient; for before *Pliny's* Time, there was no other way to grind Corn but with Mills turn'd by Strength of Hand, or Draught of Cattle. And  
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though it appears by this Author, that there were then some Water-Mills; yet by the Account he gives of them, *lib.* 18. *c.* 10. one may see, that it was an Engine not yet very common, nor very perfect; since he mentions it as not the ordinary way of grinding, which yet, as soon as it came to be well known, put an End to all other.

## XXIX.

Printing likewise is a thing very plain and very natural; and there is no Reason to fear Time will be able to suppress that, which gives Eternity to all other things. 'Tis a matter of great Admiration, how it should lye so many Ages undiscovered; and how the Ancients, who were skill'd in graving on Brass, should miss this great Art of Dispatch, when it was so obvious to consider, how easie it would be to imprint in a Moment on Paper all those graved Characters, which it would cost a great deal of Time, even but to write with a Pen, though this Thought never came into any Man's Head in several Ages; and so fair a  
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Beginning was never improved into the Art of Printing, till about Two Hundred Years since; yet the Eternity of the World could by no Means admit of so late a Discovery of it; and 'tis impossible to imagin, that Men, in an infinite Succession of Generations, should not infinitely sooner have perfected so useful and obvious an Invention; which, once brought to Light, must needs continue to Eternity, should the World last so long.

## XXX.

The same may be said of Gunpowder; what Use do we make of it both in the Recreations of Peace, and the Business of War? How much more convenient is a Birding-Piece for the killing of Game, than a Cross or Long-Bow? And of how many cumbersome Engines, of no great Force, do Cannons and Mines at once ease us? Heretofore well walled Towns were not to be taken, but by raising Ramparts of Earth as high as the Battlements, and there coming to Handy-Blows. The least petty Garrison would stop the Progress of a victorious

ous



ous Army Six Months together; and the taking of one of the Towns in the Low Countries, would have been more than a Years Work for *Cesar* and *Alexander*, with all their Valour. The World is too malicious ever to let go again an Invention so serviceable to their ill Nature. The main Ingredient of this Composition lay always in View, was every where at Hand ; the Preparation of it not difficult, the Trial of it easie to be made, and yet 'tis but a little while since the World has known it.

## XXXI.

What strange Advantages have we from the Use of the Compass? It hath discover'd to us a new World, united the distant Parts of the Old, and furnishes constant Supplies to the Wants of both, 'Tis so simple and obvious a thing, that one cannot enough wonder how Mankind so long overlook'd it. The Loadstone its self, that we have Reason to think is as old as the World, is to be found plentifully in several Parts of it, and very apt to make its self be taken Notice of,  
by

by so sensible and so surprising an Effect, as its Attraction of Iron, and its strong Adhesion to it. And can one imagine, that the busie inquisitive Nature of Man, in an infinite Number of Ages, should never by Chance, or out of Curiosity, observe the Verticity and pointing to the *North*, which that Stone hath in its self, and so readily communicates to Iron? Can we think it reasonable to suppose, that it required as long a Duration, as was from Eternity to our great Grandfathers Days, to discover this useful Quality in that common Metal, in which it is so near natural, that almost every Place hath the Virtue of a Loadstone to produce it, and our common Utensils get only by standing in our Chimny-Corners; and yet this Discovery, when once made, doth, by its proper Use, so unavoidably spread it self over all the World, that Nothing less than the total Extirpation of all Mankind, can ever possibly make it be forgotten.

## XXXII.

All these, and several other Inventions, are so obvious, that 'tis not possible to suppose the Duration of the World could be eternal, without finding them. And they are so useful, that 'tis impossible for them ever to be lost, being once found. These then being, as they are, but of yesterday, clearly prove that Men are so too; since an eternal Race of Men must needs have found them sooner, and necessarily continued them down to us when they had once found them.

## XXXIII

All then that we see in the World leads us to Assurance, that it hath not always been, and that there is one above the World that hath created all other Beings. And 'tis a very trifling Cavil of the Atheists, who object to us, that this Being is incomprehensible, and that we admit what we cannot conceive. For being infinite, it is not strange it should surpass the Capacity of our finite and limited Under-

derstandings. Our Reason can reach so far, as to comprehend that something really exists, which is incomprehensible. But this incomprehensible being once granted, it makes all Nature in some sort comprehensible, and enables us to give an Account of several things, which are otherwise inexplicable, (*viz.*) Matter is, because God created it. There is Motion; because God produced and continues it. This particular Body is in this Place; because God having at first created it in a certain Place, it is come into this where it now is, by a Succession of Changes not infinite. There are thinking Beings; because God creates them, when he sees Bodies fitted to entertain them. The Mountains are not levelled; because there hath not been Time enough since their Creation, to wear them down. There are Men and Women; because descended from one Man and one Woman, who God at first created, about Six Thousand Years since. There are Animals; because God at first formed these Machins, and gave them Power to multiply and propagate their Kinds in the ordinary way of  
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Generation. There are no Records of History above Four Thousand Years old; because the World not being above Six, 'tis not to be wondered that Men, in the Beginning, applied themselves only to such Arts as were most serviceable to their Preservation. All this hath a perfect Harmony and Agreement with the Doctrine of the Scripture concerning the Deity and the Creation of the World.

## XXXIV.

But those, who endeavouring to reduce all to the narrow scantling of their own Capacity, will not admit this incomprehensible Being, because they do not comprehend it, are so far from getting clear from that Difficulty, which, without Reason, they charge on us, that they are thereby the more intangled; instead of one incomprehensible Being, which they reject, the World, and every Part of it, becomes to them incomprehensible. They are forced to admit, in all things, an infinite Progress and Succession of Causes, depending one on another,

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without ever coming to one first, and independent; which is that, of all others, which is the most incomprehensible, most contrary to our Reason.

Ask how comes this Man to be in the World? It is, they must say, because he is the Son of such a Father, and he of such an one, and so *in infinitum*:

Why is this Lion upon the Earth? because he was begot by a Lion, that was begot by another, and so without End.

How came this Part of Matter to be in this Place? because it was thrust out of that other, and so to Infinity. So that in this way of Proceeding, there is Infinity every where, and consequently every where Incomprehensibility.

By which Means their Minds are forced to sink under the smallest Atom; because they would bristle up against that one only thing, under which it is fit and glorious for them to stoop, and submit all their Faculties.



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## DISCOURSE II.

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### Of the Weakness of Man.

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*Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, for I  
am weak.*

#### I.

**P**RIDE is a swelling of the Heart, whereby Man stretches himself, and grows great in his own Imagination. And the Idea it gives us of our selves, is the Idea of Strength, Power, and Greatness. This is the Reason why Riches puff us up, seeing from them we take Occasion to fancy our selves greater and stronger; we look on them, according to the Expression of the wise Man, as a strong Town,

which secures us from the Injuries of Fortune, and enables us to lord it over others. This causes that Haughtiness, which, according to the Scripture, rises from Riches.

## II.

The Pride of Grandees is of the same kind with that of the Wealthy ; and consists, as that, in the Idea they have of their Power. But since in the Contemplation of themselves alone, they find not wherewithal to stuff out this mighty Idea, they are wont to take in all those that are about them, or belong to them. A great Man, in the Idea he hath fram'd of himself, is not one single Man ; but a Man stuck round, with all those that depend on him, with as many Arms as are all theirs ; because he moves and disposes of them. The Idea a General hath of himself, includes all his Soldiers and Artillery. Thus every one labours as much as he can, to take up a great deal of Room in his own Imagination. And Men bustle and advance themselves in the World, for nothing else but to enlarge this Idea which every one

One makes of himself in his own Mind: Behold, there the goodly End of all the ambitious Designs of Mankind! *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, in all their Battles, had no other Aim but this. And if one ask, why the *Grand-Seignior* hath lately caused the Slaughter of an Hundred Thousand Men in *Candy*; it was only to swell the Idea he hath of himself, by the additional Title of a Conqueror.

III.

This is the Mint of all those haughty Titles, which are multiplied in Proportion, as this Pride within grows greater, or is less concealed. I believe he that first of all call'd himself High and Mighty, fancied himself stalking upon the Heads of his Vassals; and 'twas that he meant by this Epithite High, so little agreeable to the low Condition of Man. The Nations of the *East*, being much more foolishly vain, far outdo us of *Europe*, in these gigantick Titles. A whole Page is too little for those of the most petty Prince in the *Indies*. Some swell them up with an Inventory of their Furniture, Jewels, and, Elephants;

and a particular of their Revenues; for even all this is taken in, to make part of that Phantome, with which they entertain their Vanity.

## IV.

This perhaps is the very Reason why Men so very passionately covet the Approbation of others; because it serves so well to confirm and settle them in the good Opinion they have of themselves. They imagin themselves to be something excellent; and if the publick Vogue move but that way, it breaths Life into that Idea they have fashion'd and dote on within; it then becomes past doubt, true and real; and they cannot be mistaken in a thing wherein they have the concurrent Testimony of so many Admirers.

## V.

'Tis this Idea, that gives that different Relish we find in abundance of trivial things, that please or disgust us, whereof at first we do not discover the Reason. We all, even those that  
are

are not covetous, take Pleasure to win at all sorts of Games; and every one is uneasie when he loses; because we look on our selves, when we lose, as unfortunate, which carries with it the Idea of Weakness and Misery; and when we win, we consider our selves as successful, which brings to our Minds the Idea of Power; because we suppose Fortune declares her self for us. We talk with Delight of the past Hardships and Hazards we have met with, taking Occasion from thence to reflect on our selves, as under the peculiar Protection of the Almighty, or else as being furnished with sufficient Vigor and Dexterity to deal with the Evils of this Life.

## VI.

If then Man's Pride builds it self up upon the Idea he has of his own Strength: The readiest way to humble him, is to give him a View of his own Weakness: We must try to prick this Bubble, to let the Wind out that swells it. We must remove the Illusion, and pull off the Disguise that makes a Man look big to himself, by



setting before him his Smalness and Infirmities: Not thereby to deject or despirit him; but to dispose him to seek that Support and Establishment, that Strength and Greatness in God alone, which is not to be found in the narrow Compass of his own Being, nor in all those things that are talk'd to him.

## VII.

But one ought to take heed, not to follow their Steps, who, under Pretence of abating the Pride of Man, have endeavoured to sink him as low as the Beasts; and have proceeded so far as to maintain, that he hath no Advantages above them. Such Discourses cross the Design; they pretend to advance, and they seem rather to be the Sallies of Wit and Sport, than the sober Arguments of Reason. There is in Man so clear and lively a Sense of his Excellency above other Animals, that in vain one goes about to stifle it, with those slight Arguments or little Observations, frivolous or false. All that Truth aims at, is but our Humiliation; and though it a bound



bound with Arguments to press this, yet how many are there that make a Shift to render ineffectual all its Reasons, how clear and cogent soever? What then can we expect from those slight Reasonings, whose Weakness is discovered by an internal Light which cannot be extinguished.

VIII.

It is to be fear'd, that such Discourses, instead of springing from a sincere Acknowledgment of the Meanness of Man, and a Design to take down his Pride, take their Rise from a secret Vanity, or some more corrupt Principle. For there are those, who, willing to live like Beasts, find no great Humiliation in that Doctrine which supposes them no better than Beasts. But on the contrary, they meet with Satisfaction in it; since it allows them to follow their brutish Courses with less Shame, when they can look on them as more agreeable to their Nature. Besides, they are well content to lay themselves thus low, whilst they bring down with them, to the same Level, those whose

Greatness and Reputation is troublesome to them. They matter not much to be themselves ranked with Beasts, so they may but make Kings and Princes part of the Herd, and place Philosophers and Scholars in the Drove with Sheep and Asses.

## IX.

Let us not then trouble our selves to look for Proofs of our Weakness in these vain Imaginations. We have real and substantial Instances enough of it in our selves. We need for Conviction but cast our Eyes on our own Bodies, and our own Minds; not with a transient, superficial Glance, which overlooks what we like not; but in a thorough and impartial Survey which may shew us to our selves, such as really we are, and discover what we have of Strength or Weakness, Meanness or Grandure in us.

## X.

Looking on Man, as it were a first off, we perceive at first blush, a Body and Soul joined together in a close and

and inconceivable Union. So that the Impressions made on the Body reach the Mind, and those of the Mind affect the Body; no one in the mean Time being able to apprehend the Reason or Manner of this Communication between Two things of so different Natures: Afterwards taking a nearer Station, the better to observe these Two Parts more distinctly, one finds the Body an Engine, made up of an infinite Number of Tubes and Vessels, Springs and Pullies, admirably contrived and fitted to several Uses, and to the Production of an infinite Variety of Motions, subservient either to the Preservation of this Engine its self, or to other Employments. And on the other Side, that the Soul is an intelligent Being, capable of Good and Evil, Happiness or Misery. That there are certain Operations of the Body, that depend not on the Soul; and others that always wait its Commands, and would never be without its Influence. And of these Actions, some, as Eating and Drinking, serve only to preserve the Body; and others, to other Purposes.

## XI.

This Engine, thus strictly united to the Soul, is neither immortal, nor incapable to be put out of Order. On the contrary, it is of a Make that lasts but a certain Number of Years, and carries in its-self the Causes of its own Ruin ; nay, it reaches not always that Period ; but is often in a very little Time broken and destroyed : And even whilst it is preserved in its entire Being, is subject to infinite Wants and Disorders, full of Pain and Trouble, which we call Diseases. Men have in vain attempted in their Books to state their Number. They are more than we can imagin ; it being impossible that such an infinite Number of tender Vessels and small Pipes, through which the Spirit and Humours continually pass, should remain long without being out of Order. And which is yet worse, the Disorder stops not there, it extends its self to the Mind, it disturbs, afflicts, and disquiets that, and causes there Pain and Anxiety.

## XII.

## XII.

Man has the Power to move several Parts of this Engine, which obey his Will, and thereby proportionably to his Strength, to move other Bodies without him. Some have a greater Share of this Force than others; but they that have most, have but a very little. So that to carry on his great Works, Man is fain to borrow Help from the great Motions Nature hath placed in Fire, Water and Air; and to apply their Force to his Purposes. Hence he gains Succour to his Weakness, and thus assisted, does much more than he could alone; and yet with all this Aid, all that he does amounts almost to Nothing. And it will appear, that, allowing him all the Force with which his Skill or Industry can furnish him from other Bodies, he hath little Reason to vaunt himself in the Mightiness of his Power.

## XIII.

Self-Love is the Mother and Nurse of this extravagant Idea; for by that  
Man

Man becoming possessed, and wholly taken up by himself alone, amongst all the things of the World, minds only those which relate to, and have some Connection with himself. He cuts himself out a Kind of Eternity, by the short Scantling of his own Life; because he possesses no Part of what is beyond the Confines of that. And he makes to himself a World of that little Circle of Creatures that are about him, and with which he hath to do. And 'tis by the Place he bestows on himself in this Universe, that he forms that flattering Idea of his own Greatness.

## XIV.

It seems as if it were on Purpose to efface this natural Illusion that God, designing to lay *Job* low before his sovereign Majesty, made him as it were go out of himself, to take a View of the World and the Creatures in it, thereby to convince him of his Weakness and Imbecility, when he should see so many things, and observe so many Effects, surpassing not only his Power but Apprehension. And indeed



deed the readiest way to reform this wrong Idea Man frames of the Mightiness of his own Being, by comparing himself only with himself, or with Men of his own Likeness, is to make him look abroad amongst the other Creatures, and take Notice what they discover to us of the infinite Greatness of their Maker. The greater and the more powerful God shall appear to us, the weaker and less shall we appear to our selves: And 'tis only when we lose the Sight of this infinite Power of the Almighty, that we seem something in our own Eyes.

## XV.

To pursue then these Thoughts to which the Scripture gives us an Inlet, let every one consider that infinite Duration which is before and after him, and, finding his Life inclosed in it, let him observe how much of it that takes up. Let him examin himself how it comes to pass, that he began to appear on the Stage at one Instant rather than another of this Eternity, and whether he perceives in himself the Power to give himself Being,  
or

or preserve himself in it. Let him enter into the same Contemplation of Space, and carry his Thoughts into that Immensity where his Imagination can find no Limits. Let him take a Prospect of the Demensions of these astonishing Heaps of Matter, which lie within the Reach of his Senses; and in that Survey, let him cast up how much of it is fallen to his Share, and what Portion of this Mass goes to the making up of his Body. Let him consider what it is, and what Place it takes up in the Universe. Let him endeavour to find why this Matter is rather in one Part than another of this infinite Expansion. From this Prospect it is impossible he should look on the whole Earth as any other than a narrow Dungeon, to which he finds himself confin'd: And then how much Room is it on this Earth that he fills up? 'Tis true, he hath a Power of shifting Places, but with no other Advantage but of losing as much Room in one Place as he takes Possession of in another. And he must needs look on himself as an imperceptible Attoime, swallowed up and lost in the Immensity of the Universe.

## XVI.

Let him add to this Consideration, that of all those great Motions that agitate the Mass of Matter, and carry about those vast Bodies that take their Courses over our Heads. Let him consider all that is done in this visible World, independent of him; and thence pass to the intellectual World, that infinite Number of Angels and Devils, and the vast Multitude of the Dead, who are not dead but in relation to us, being now more alive and active than heretofore. Let him add to these all the living that think not on him, that know him not, that are not under his Power; and having well weighed this, let him ask himself what he is in either of these Worlds, what Rank he holds, what is his Strength, Power, or Greatness, compared with that of all other Creatures.

## XVII.

This Consideration tends principally to humble Man in the Presence of  
God,

God, and make him acknowledge his own Weakness, in comparison of the Almighty Power of his Maker : And 'tis no small Business thus to humble him ; since he is not thus lift up in himself, but when he forgets what he is in respect of God. Therefore the Apostle St. Peter counsels us, *to humble our selves under the powerful Hand of God.* It serves also to remove that foolish Delight a Man takes in the Contemplation of the Rank he holds in that little World wherein he shuts himself up ; because, being brought out into a larger Theater, he is forced to associate himself with those Beings from which he withdrew, only to find a Retreat wherein he might bestow on himself a phantastical Greatness. But we ought to proceed yet farther, and to make him see, that even that Power which he ascribes to himself in his own little World, is nothing but meer Weakness ; and that his Vanity in all Respects is but ill bottom'd.

## XVIII.

This pretended Power, this imaginary Greatness, hath no Foundation but in this Life ; since he hath no Prospect of himself but in the World, and looks on those that are gone, as it were passed into Nothing. But what is this Life upon which he establishes himself, and what Power hath he to preserve it ? It depends on an Engine so nice, and made up of so many curious Contrivances, that instead of wondering how it decays, we have Reason to admire how it lasts but a Moment. The least Vessel crack'd, or the smallest Passage stopp'd, hindering the Course of the Blood and Humours, is enough to ruin the whole Oeconomy. A little Effusion of Blood upon the Brain serves to intercept the Communication of Spirits; and deprive us of Motion. If we saw how little a thing puts an End to our Lives, we should stand amazed at it: 'Tis no more sometimes than a small Drop of a disagreeing Liquor, a little Grain of Matter in a wrong Place : And yet this Drop,  
this



this Grain, is sufficient to overturn the mighty Designs of those great Conquerors, those Masters of the World, to lay them flat in the Dust, make them Food for Worms, and, in respect of other Men, reduce them to Nothing.

## XIX.

I remember I was by once, when there was shew'd to a Person of great Quality and Parts, an extraordinary fine Piece of Workmanship in Ivory. It was a little Man, set upon a Pillar, so slender, that the least Breath of Wind was enough to shake it to Pieces, and one could not sufficiently admire the Skill of the Hand that could work it to that Smalness. But he, instead of being surpris'd, as were the rest of the Company, declared, That the Usefulness of the thing, and the Loss of the Artisan's Time about it, had come cross him so, that he could not bring his Mind to consider that Curiosity which the others admir'd in it. I found this Thought very reasonable ; but believed it, at the same Time, applicable to several other things



things of greater Moment. All those great Fortunes, by which the Ambitious raise themselves, as by several Degrees upon the Necks of the small and the great, are held up by Props as slender and as frail, in their Kind, as that of the Ivory. A little Turn of Fancy in a Prince, or a malignant Vapour exhaling from those about him, bring to the Ground that lofty Structure of Ambition; and at best, it is built but on the Life of the Founder: He dying, his Fortune tumbles, and sinks to Nothing with him. And what can there be found more uncertain, more crazy, than the Life of Man? That ivory Toy, kept with Care, may be preserved as long as one please; but then is no Caution, no Endeavour able to preserve our Lives; no Means to be used that can hinder them from coming in a short Time to an End.

## XX.

Should Man but reflect sometimes on the Uncertainty of Life, they would be less forward to engage themselves in Designs that required immortal Under-  
der-

dertakers, and Bodies made of another-guise Fashion than ours? If those whom we have seen, make themselves vast Fortunes, that were torn to Pieces soon after their Deaths, had seen a distinct Relation laid before them of every Particular that was to happen to them and their Families; had they been expressly told, that in the way they were going, they should make a Shew in the World for a certain Number of Years, accompanied with a Thousand Cares and Crosses, and a Thousand Anxieties; that they should do all they could to raise a Family, and leave it great in Estate and Preferments; that they should die at such a Time, and then all Tongues, all Pens should be let loose upon them; that their Families should be extinct, and all their vast Possessions come into the Hands of Strangers: If, I say, they had foreseen and considered all this, can one believe, that they should have been at so much Pains for so small a Purchase? I, for my Part, cannot think it. If Men do not directly promise themselves Immortality, (for the Cheat would be too palpable) yet they never fix  
their

their Thoughts on determinate Bounds of their Lives and Fortunes. They are well content to forget them, to forbear the Thoughts of them. It is fit then for to put them in Mind, and remonstrate to them, that all this Grandure, all this Wealth, they heap up, is sustain'd only by a Life which every thing is able to remove from under it.

## XXI.

'Tis Nothing but want of minding their own Frailty, and a senseless Presumption that they shall get safe through all Dangers, that sets Men upon Voyages to the remotest Parts of the World, and makes them carry their Bodies, that is in their Sense, all their Being, as far as *China*, to bring from thence Drugs and Varnish. If they thought seriously on it, if they cast up their Accounts and compared what they ventured, with what they hoped to get, they would certainly conclude, that it was not worth while, for a little Gain, to expose so tender an Engine as their Bodies to so many Hardships and Hazards? They are wil-

wilfully blind in their own Concernments: They love Nothing but Life, and yet hazard it on all Occasions. And they have even establish'd this as a Maxim amongst themselves, That it is a Shame to be afraid to put it in Danger.

## XXII.

If a Man, to excuse himself from the War, when his Duty called him not thither, should say, He kept himself at Home, because his Skull was not Cannon-Proof, nor his Flesh impenetrable to Swords and Halberts; methinks, he talk'd great Reason: And it seems to me an Inference rightly drawn from the general Temper of Men, who regard Nothing but the Things of this Life; for since there is no enjoying them without living, a Man cannot be guilty of a greater Folly, than unnecessarily to venture his Life, which is the Foundation of that Enjoyment: Nevertheless Men have agreed to look on such Discourses as ridiculous, which shews, that their Minds are yet weaker than their Bodies, as we shall see by and by.

XXIII.

## XXIII.

But since it is only Mens shutting the Frailty of Life out of their Thoughts, that lets in the Opinion of their own Strength, it is good to be always laying before them, that those Grandures of Mind or Body, which they ascribe to themselves, are all link'd to this pitiful Life, which it self is fasten'd to Nothing; and besides, is continually exposed to a Thousand Accidents. And should we 'scape them all, yet this whole Machin of the World is constantly at work, with a Force irresistible, to destroy our Bodies: And the Motion of whole Nature every Day carries away some part of them; 'tis a Building, under whose Foundations there is a Mine constantly at work, a Pile that will, when its Props are decay'd, shatter it self to Pieces; and this, without that, any one can punctually determine, whether its Ruine be at hand, or at a distance.

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XXIV.



## XXIV.

'Tis strange how Men can build upon Life as a sure and substantial thing in the midst of those plain and plentiful Instances they have of its Uncertainty. I do not here call back to their Thoughts those Persons they observe every Moment to disappear, who are as so many Monitors that cry aloud to them, That they are mortal, and must ere long follow them: I speak not of Distempers that afflict but sometimes, and come as Scourges to rouse them out of their Drowsiness, and make them think of dying. I speak of a Disease that they have continually upon them, the Necessity they are under of repairing the Decays of Nature, by eating and drinking. There cannot be a more effectual way to imprint on us a lively Sense of our Frailty, than by this constant Want, to convince us of the continual wasting of our Bodies, which we endeavour thus to supply, and labour to support against the impetuous Current of the Universe, which drags us to our Graves. Hunger and Thirst  
are



are an incurable Malady ; we get off the Fit for a while, but the Disease remains, and at last prevails over all our Remedies.

## XXV.

Take the bravest Man in the World, and keep him but Two Days fasting, and you shall see him languish almost without Motion or Thought, wholly taken up with the Sense of his own Want and Weakness. He must have a Supply of Nourishment, to wind up those Springs, and set those Wheels a going, without which the Soul cannot perform her Operations. What can there be of greater Humiliation than this Necessity? And yet this is not the most irksome of all ; because not the hardest to be satisfied ; that of Sleep is far otherwise. To maintain our Lives, we must every Day die, resigning up our selves into a Condition void of Thought, void of Reason, wherein Men are not distinguish'd from Beasts: And we pass a great Part of our Lives in an Estate wherein we live not at all.

## XXVI.

God having placed us under these Necessities, it is our Part to submit to them. But that forbids not that we should look on them as Marks of our Weakness; nay, one End why he subjected us to them, was, by reducing us daily to the Condition of Beasts, to put us in Mind of our own Meanness. And yet so perverse a Creature is Man, that he makes that which was designed for his Humiliation serve as an Occasion of Vanity. There is Nothing wherein he affects greater Shew of State and Magnificence than in Feasting. It is attended with Honour and Reputation; and Men are so far from Humility in this Matter, that they make Use of their Kitchens to distinguish themselves from others; and think they are above their Neighbours when they can furnish their Tables with more Cost, and Variety, and Ostentation.

## XXVII.

## XXVII.

Men are easie enough to be persuaded of this Feebleness of their Bodies, and Misery of their Condition, as speculative Truths, though they are very hardly brought to apply themselves to a close and effectual Consideration of them ; and more backward yet to prosecute the plain Consequences so far as to resolve, that they ought not to make the least Account of any thing that rests upon so weak and tottering a Foundation as that of their Lives. But they have other Weaknesses, which they do not only not mind, but are so far from counting them Weaknesses, that they look on them under a quite contrary Notion. Their Learning, Knowledge, Virtue, the Strength of their Parts, and Largeness of their Capacities, are things they value themselves upon, and they think they can do great Matters. The Philosophy of the Heathens is stuffed with Elogies of the Nature of Man, and the Endowments of his Mind : And the Discourses of the World are not more sparing of them. This makes them

have very good Thoughts of themselves when they take a View of themselves on that Side.

## XXVIII.

But they will do well to consider, in the first Place, that this Forwardness to measure themselves by the Opinion of others, and not by the Truth of things, is a great Weakness; since 'tis certain, that the Mistakes of Men cannot bestow Reality where it is not. And if we are not humble enough to forbear pleasuring our selves in what we indeed have, at least let us not be so stupidly vain, as to ascribe to our selves that which we have not. Let us examin what it is that puffs us up. Let us see what there is of real and solid in the learned Sciences, or humane Virtues; and make no Difficulty to pare off from them all that is false and useless.

## XXIX.

Knowledge is either of Words, or of Things, or of Actions: I agree, that Men may go a great way in the  
Science

Science of Words and Signs, *i. e.* in the Knowledge of that arbitrary Connection they have made of certain Sounds with certain Ideas. I will allow that the Memory, which can, without Confusion, lodge so many different Images, is matter of Admiration ; on Condition, that it be granted me, that this sort of Science is a great Misery, and an Instance, not only of Mens Ignorance, but almost of their Incapacity of becoming knowing ; for this is a Science not valued for it self. We study not Words, but to gain the Knowledge of Things ; 'tis but the Way, not the End : But a Way so long, so difficult, that it takes up a good Part of our Lives, and in some, the whole. And all the Fruit of all this Pains is only to learn, that Men have imployed certain Sounds to stand for certain Things, without gaining thereby the least Knowledge of the Nature of the Things themselves. And yet this empty kind of Learning serves Men well enough to pride themselves in ; and that which helps forward their Vanity, is, that they have not Steadiness enough, not to be wrought on by the



Opinion of the Ignorant, who perceiving more their want of this than all the other Sciences, commonly admire those who have Skill in it.

## XXX.

There is not much more Solidity in the Knowledge of Actions, or historical Occurrences. With how little Exactness and Conformity to Truth are Matters related in Histories? This we may see in things of our own Knowledge, when they come to be writ by others. How shall we do then to distinguish the true from the false, the certain from the doubtful? We are sure every Historian is a Liar, either without Design, if he be sincere; or a Cheat, if he be not. But since neither the one nor the other ever gives me Notice where he warps, it is impossible for me to avoid being deceived. In this Regard we are less abused in the Perusal of Romances; because one brings no Expectation of Truth to the Reading of them; but 'tis that we aim at in the Study of History, and yet we are scarce ever sure to find it there. Where Relations



tions cannot be said directly to be false, how far are they even there unlike the things themselves? 'Tis but the Skeleton of Affairs we have in History, void of those secret Springs, and strip'd of those Circumstances that gave Rise and Success to them. It presents us only the outside of Actions, without the Design, the Soul that enliven'd them: and sets before us the Matter of Fact, bare and naked; or perhaps some few of those Circumstances on which it depended; whereas there was not one of these Occurrences, which was not the Effect of an infinite Number of Causes, with which it had Connection, and which were as the Sinews and Flesh that sustain'd and fashion'd it. The Knowledge then of History is a very pitiful Business; and instead of furnishing us with matter of vain Satisfaction, it gives us just Occasion to humble our selves under the Sense of our Weakness; since having our Heads fill'd with Ideas drawn from History, we find our selves unable to distinguish the true from the false, and under a Necessity of contenting our selves with a Knowledge altogether superficial.

## XXXI.

In the same Rank may be placed the Knowledge of Mens Opinions, on several Subjects, upon which they have imploy'd their Meditations; since these make one great part of our Learning. For as if Men had an endless Stock of Time to waste, they are not satisfied with an Enquiry into things as they are; but do also make Collections of what has been other Mens Fancies about them: Or rather, succeeding ill in their Search of Truth, they take up with the Opinions of those that have endeavoured to find it; and believe themselves mighty Philosophers and great Physicians, because they know the Tenets of several Philosophers, and the Opinions of divers Doctors on every Case. Hence it comes to pass, that Men, resolving to be learned, and in effect knowing Nothing, have bethought themselves of this Trick, to give the Name of Science to that Knowledge which deserves it not at all. For as a Man becomes not rich by knowing all the vain Idea's of those who have hunted  
after

after the Philosopher's Stone ; so neither is a Man the more knowing, for having in his Head all the Imaginations of those who have sought Truth without finding it.

## XXXII.

There remains to be examined only the Knowledge of things, *i. e.* that Knowledge which has for its End the Satisfaction of the Mind in the Possession of Truth. When Men shall have made great Progress in this kind, they will have but little Reason to be very brag of it ; since these empty and insignificant Discoveries are so incapable of bringing any Advantage or solid Satisfaction, that a Man is equally happy in a total Neglect of them at once, as he is after long Labour in a perfect Acquisition. Let a great Mathematician beat his Brains as much as he please, to understand the Figure of the Planet Saturn ; or to count the several Combinations of Letters in the *Æneids* of *Virgil* ; the meanest Woman, laughing at all his Learning, is as valuable a thing as he. And indeed, if there be any Pleasure  
in

in these kinds of Discoveries, it is all placed in the Pursuit, and not in the Attainment. The very first Taste cloy's us, and after that we either do not mind or not relish them. The Mind delights its self wholly in the Search; because then it is lead on with flattering Hopes of an imaginary Good, its Fancies is to be found in the Discovery it pursues. But as soon as it hath reach'd it, those Hopes vanish, and it nauseates the Fruits of its own Labour, and is fain to cast about for a new Chase to keep it self from languishing.

## XXXIII.

But 'tis not enough that the Uselessness of the Sciences should abate a Man's Pride, he ought moreover to acknowledge, that all his Acquisitions in them amounts to little more than Nothing: And that the greatest part of humane Philosophy, is but an Heap of Obscurities, Uncertainties, nay, and Falshoods too. There needs no other Proof of this than what we have seen happen in our Days. After Men have been teaching and studying Philosophy,

losophy, upon divers Principles, for these Three Thousand Years together, there starts up a little Fellow, in a Corner of the World, who changes the whole Face of it, and undertakes to shew, that all those who went before him understood Nothing of the Principles of Nature. Wherein there is something more than empty boasting; for it must be acknowledged, that this new Philosopher gives us more Light into natural things than all the other together; nevertheless, how happy soever he has been to discover the Weakness of the Principles, in the common Philosophy, he has left in his own some Obscurities, which the Wit of Man cannot clear up. His Doctrine of Space, and the Nature of Matter, hath horrible Difficulties; and I fear me, they have more Heat than Light, who declare themselves not startled at them. What greater Instance can one have of the Weakness of Man's Understanding, than to see that Men (and those who seem of all others to have had the strongest Parts) have been employ'd these Three Thousand Years long in the Study of Nature; and that after that  
in-



infinite Number of Books they have writ on this Subject, it is found they understood so little of it, and were so far out of the way, that they are to begin all a-new; and that the only Benefit one can make of all their Works, is, to learn, that Philosophy is a vain Amusement, and that Men know almost Nothing.

## XXXIV.

When the Ignorant gaze on great Libraries, which may fitly be called the Magazines of many Fancies, they conceit that he would certainly be very happy, or at least very able, who knew all that was contained in those Volumes of humane Sciences, which they consider as Treasures of Knowledge and Truth. If all this were crowded into one Head, that Head would be neither the happier nor wiser, neither the more prudent, nor more knowing. All this would serve but to fill it with Darknefs and Confusion; and a Head thus furnished, would be very little different from an ordinary Library; for as there a Man can read but one Book at once, and  
but



but one Leaf of that Book ; juſt ſo this Man, with all theſe Books in his Head, would not be able to apply his Thoughts to more than one Book, and part of one Book at a Time. All the reſt would be, in a manner, as far out of his Mind as if he had never known a Word of them. And all the Advantage he can draw from thence is, only ſometimes to ſupply the Want of Books, by romaging in his Memory for what is lodg'd there. And after all, he cannot be ſo certain, as if at the time he took the Pains to turn to it in the Author himſelf, and read it there.

## XXXV.

To comprehend truly what the Knowledge of Man is, we ought by Degrees to trace it to thoſe narrow Bounds to which it is confin'd. It would amount but to a ſmall Matter, even if our Minds were large enough to apply themſelves at once to all that lay in our Memories ; for our whole Stock of Truth at beſt is but little. But as I have ſaid, we muſt at the very firſt Step make a large Abatement ;  
for

for we are able to consider but one single Object, but one Truth at a Time : All the rest lies buried in our Memories so as if it were not there. See there our whole Knowledge, already reduced to one only Object : But after what Manner is it that we know that one ? If it hath several Qualities, 'tis but one of them that we consider at a Time : We parcel out simple things into divers Idea's ; because our Minds are too narrow to comprehend them. The whole of any thing is too big for our Capacity. The Understanding must contract it, or cut off a good Part, to fit it to its own Scantiness.

## XXXVI.

The Sight of our Minds and of our Bodies are much alike, both superficial, both bounded. Our Eyes peirce not into the Inside of Things, they stick at the Surface : The further they extend their View, the more confused it is ; and to look on any Object distinctly, they must lose the Sight of all others : And if the Objects be at a Distance, the Weakness of the Organ, which takes the Picture of them, shrinks them to a Smalness,

Smallness, wherein they are equal but to the least Bodies that are near us. These vast Masses of Matter, called Stars, are but as Points in our Eyes, and appear often less to us than the small Flame of a Candle; just after this Manner is the View of things in our Minds, we know Nothing of most of them beyond the Shell and Surface; we separate as it were a Piece of the outward Skin, to make the Object of our Thoughts. If they are of any Largeness, they confound us, and we are fain to consider them by Piece-Meal; and the Multitude of Parts runs us often into the same Confusion which we would avoid by Division, *Confusum est quicquid, in pulverem sectum est.* When Objects are removed from our Senses, though we reach them with our Thoughts, we yet touch them often, but as it were in a Point; and we form to our selves Ideas so faint and so little, of the greatest and most amazing things, that they make less Impression on us than the smallest of those that affect our Senses.

## XXXVII.

But this is not all yet : Though our Knowledge be very little, our Certainty is yet less : And that small Portion of Truth which falls to its Lot, the Mind holds by a very doubtful Tenure. Distrust and Uncertainty frequently disturb the Possession. Falsehood often appears in Colours so like Truth, that the Understanding is at a Loss where to fasten ; it embraces therefore its Object but coldly, and as it were trembling ; and it defends its self against those Arguments that drives it to a Nonplus, only by a certain kind of instinct and internal Sensation, which makes it stick to certain Truths, in spite of those Reasons that seem to shake it.

## XXXVIII.

Well then, this so much cried up Knowledge of Man, see to what it is come, (*viz.*) to know successively a few Truths, after a Fashion, very weak and unassured. But amongst those Truths, how few are there that are use-

useful ; and of those yet, how few are so to the Men themselves, and which do not become to them Occasions of Error ? For it is one Effect farther of the Weakness of Men, that Light often blinds them as well as Darkness, and Truth deceives as well as Error ; for since Conclusions do commonly depend upon the Connection of several Truths, and not one Truth alone, it comes to pass often, that a Truth imperfectly understood, being, by Mistake, thought sufficient to direct us, leads us out of the Way. How many are there that run themselves into great Indiscretions, by the Knowledge of this Truth, that we ought to reprove our Neighbours ? How many that justify their Faint-heartedness upon Principles of Christian Condescension ?

## XXXIX.

Where we see no way, we ramble ; and where we find many, we are at a stand. A Perspicuity of Mind, that lays before us many Reasons and divers Considerations, does as well deceive us, as an arrant Stupidity that  
sees



fees Nothing. We are mislead by those whose Errors we embrace: And on the other Side, deceive our selves by the Discoveries we make of the Errors of others, carried away by an Opinion, that they are out in every thing, when 'tis often but in some Particulars.

## XL.

The Discovery of Truth, in most Cases, depends upon our comparing Probabilities together. And what is there more deceitful than such a Comparison? For that which by the Manner of Expression is set off with a better Light, and considered with more Attention and Affection, is apt to make a far deeper Impression on our Minds than another thing, which, though founded on solid Reason, is proposed obscurely, heard with Negligence, and without the least Desire it should be true; so that the Difference of Perspicuity, Attention and Inclination counterballances the Probabilities of Arguments, and makes them often lose the Advantages they have one over another in Strength and Solidity.

XLI.

## XLI.

And what is yet more amazing is, That the Mind of Man, narrow and unsteady as it is, with all its Ignorance and Weakness, is bold and undertaking, ready to believe it self capable of all things; especially if the Breath of Flattery do but help to blow up its Presumption. What is there that is more visibly above the Understanding and Capacity of Men, learned as well as ignorant, than to penetrate into all the Depths of Religion, to comprehend all its inexplicable Mysteries, and thereby be able to resolve all Doubts, peremptorily decide all Controversies, and by telling us in short what we are to hold, what we are to reject, put an End to all farther Inquiries? Whereas it exceeds the utmost Extent of humane Understandings, to clear some one of those Points; and there are single Questions which the united Knowledge of Man would never be able fully to resolve; and what must it then be when the Business is to rectify the Mistakes, and silence all the Doubts of Men, of differ-

different Opinions, and unite all the several Churches of Christians into one Persuasion, upon Grounds of Truth and Evidence? And yet the Supporters of an old Usurpation persuade the World, that there is Nothing in all this, which exceeds their Power; to which they have, by Force, compell'd so many Hundred Millions to submit, and have severely handled Multitudes that have dared but to question it. 'Tis by this Terror, and the Threats of Hell to boot, upon the least Enquiry, the least wavering in this Point, that they have held People in Subjection; and the Hierarchy of *Rome*, having found the Sweet of Dominion over Mens Consciences, and considered it as an Advantage too great to be parted with, hath always thunder'd against those that, asserting their just Right, have withdrawn from that Slavery; and under the Name of Hereticks, hath treated them as Rebels. This monstrous Presumption [in those who are really persuaded of such a Power amongst them] is the Product of humane Weakness, and arises only from this, that Man is so far removed from an Acquaintance with

with Truth, that he knows not the Marks and Signs of it. He often forms confused Ideas of very clear and plain Terms, and this makes that he can apply them to those airy and glaring Notions that dazle him. All that pleases him becomes evident, and the Manner also wherein he maintains it; and having, as it were, consecrated his own Fancies, under the Title of indubitable Verities, clearly held forth by Scripture; [Church or Tradition] he stifles from thenceforward all the Doubts that offer to rise in his Mind, and suffers not himself to reflect on them: Or, if they ever come in his Thoughts, he considers them under the Ideas of Doubts and Difficulties, and so disarms them of all the Force should make Impression on his Mind.

## XLII.

If then the Mind, in its most enlarged Thoughts, when taking its highest Flights in Pursuit of Truth, be of so small Consideration; What shall we think of it, when wholly sunk into the Body? it confines it self  
dully

dully within its Case of Flesh, and seldom acts beyond the Senses, as is its Manner in most Men.

## XLIII.

This is that the Scripture teaches us, when it tells us, *That an earthly Habitation abases the Mind, which thinks of divers things.* For at the same Time that it shews us the natural Activity of the Mind, whereby it is able of it self to form a great Variety of Thoughts, and comprehend an infinite Number of different Objects; it points us out also the Condition it is reduced to, by being shut up in a corrupted Body, and forced to attend to the Necessities of Life; whereby it is so clogg'd and compressed, notwithstanding the great Extent of its natural Quickness and Activity, that it confines it self to a little Circle of gross Objects, about which it takes its constant Round, with a feeble and slow Motion, wherein there appears little of its native Vigor and Excellence: And in Truth, if one take a general Survey of the World, one shall find the Bulk of Mankind buried  
in



in a Stupidity so gross, that if it does not wholly dispossess them of their Reason, yet it leaves them so little Use of it, that one cannot but wonder how the Soul can be depressed into so low a Degree of Brutality. What does a *Canibal, Iroquoi, Brasilian, Negro, Caser, Groenlander* or *Laplander* think on during his whole Life? The ordinary wants of the Body, and some dull ways of supplying them, Fishing and Hunting, Dancing, and Revenge on his Enemies, is the whole Compass of his Contemplations.

XLIV.

But not to go so far for Examples of Stupidity: What takes up the Thoughts of the greatest Part of labouring Men? Their Work, Eating and Drinking, how to be paid for their Labour, and how to pay Scot and Lot, with a few other such worthy Speculations fill their Minds. They have no Notions but of these things; and their Thoughts going a constant Round in this Tract, grow rusty in Time, and unmanageable to any but the things of their usual Employment:

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Talk

Talk to them of God, Heaven, or Hell, Religion, or Morality ; they understand not what you say, or forget it as soon as said. Their Minds return presently into their old Road, which is confined within that Circle of gross Objects they have been used to : If these poor Souls are of a degree very much above the Nature of Beasts, as it really is in it self ; they are but little distant from our Idea of it. We take a Beast to be a certain Animal that thinks, yet so as to have but a few, and those gross and confused Thoughts, confined to a small Number of Objects, and incapable of other Conceptions. Thus we take an Horse to be a certain kind of Animal, that thinks of Eating, Sleeping and Running ; this is not the Idea of an Horse ; for an Engine thinks not at all ; but the Idea of a stupid Man. And surely there needs not many other Thoughts to make up the compleat Idea of an *Iroquoi*.

## XLV.

Nevertheless the World is so every where fill'd with People, that scarce  
think

think at all, and trouble themselves not about any thing but the Necessities of this Life; that they, whose Minds have a little more Agitation and Sense, are Nothing in Comparison of that prodigious Crowd of the Ignorant and Stupid. For amongst Christians themselves, all the Poor, and almost all those that live of their Hands; all Children, and the greatest Part of ordinary Women, are comprehended in this Herd. All these, during their whole Lives, think of Nothing but supplying the Exigencies of their Bodies, of Buying and Selling, and the ways to get a Livelihood. And their Thoughts, even in these Matters, are godwot, but very confused. But if you go out of Christendom, especially into the more barbarous Countries, you will find, that there it takes in whole Nations without any Exception.

## XLVI.

'Tis certain, that those who work much, as all poor People, think little: And the great harrassing of their Bodies, decays the Activity of their Minds. Riches, on the other Side,

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that

that allow Men a little more Leisure and Liberty to entertain one another, put them upon Exercise of their Thoughts, which, engaging them in Discourse and Conversation, wakens their Understandings, and suffers not their Souls to lie buried in that gross Stupidity, but stirs them into Action. The Mind of a Woman of Sense has a brisker Motion than that of a Peasant; And the Thoughts of a Magistrate are more busie than those of an Artisan. But usually this greater Motion and Activity is accompanied with more Vanity and Mischief; so that there is more real Good in an innocent Dulness, than in this Vivacity, full of Dissimulation and Artifice.

## XLVII.

Last of all, to perfect the Draught of the Weakness of our Minds, we ought to consider, that how pertinent, how serious soever are its Thoughts, it is often violently hurried away from them, by the natural Extravagancy of the Fancy. The least Fly coming cross our Sight, is able to draw us out of our gravest Contem-  
pla-

plations. An hundred insignificant Ideas glide through our Thoughts, and distract them, do what we can. And the Mind has so small a Command of it self, that it cannot hinder it self from quitting the most important Object, to gad after, or at least gaze on those airy Phantoms. May we not justly call this the first Degree of Folly? For as Lunacy in Perfection is but a Disorder of the Fancy, wherein the Images it sets before us, are all so clear and vivid, that the Mind is no longer able to distinguish the true from the false: So the Power the Imagination hath to present these Images to the Mind, without the Leave or Approbation of the Will, cannot be but a Degree towards it; and to compleat it, there needs but a little Access to the Heat of the Brain, that may make the Images a little more lively; so that between the wisest Man in the World and a perfect Bedlam, there is no other Difference but of some Degrees of Heat and Agitation of the Spirits. And we have Reason to acknowledge, not only that we are liable to Madness, but we must confess also, that we see and feel it



formed in our selves, without knowing what hinders it from quite turning our Brains, and growing up into an establish'd Phrensie.

## XLVIII.

Though the Understanding be weak to the Degree we have shewn, yet this is Nothing in Comparison of the Imperfection of that other Faculty of Man, the Will ; and considering them together, one may truly say, that a Man's Reason is his Strength, but that his Weakness lies in the Inability of his Will to follow his Reason.

It is agreed on all Hands, that Reason was given us to be our Guide in this Life, to help us to distinguish between Good and Evil, and govern our selves in our Desires and Actions ; but how few are there that make this Use of it ? How few are there that live, I say not by the exact Rules of Truth and Justice, but according to the Rule of their own Reason, quite blind, quite corrupt as it is ? We float in the Ocean of this World, under the Conduct of our Passions, with which we drive sometimes this way, some-

sometimes that way, as a Vessel without Compass, without Pilot. 'Tis not our Reason that makes Use of our Passions, but our Passions that make Use of our Reason, to compass their Ends. And this is all we make our Reason serve for.

## XLIX.

Reason is often not to be blam'd ; it sees the Way we ought to take, and is convinced of the Folly of those things we pursue, yet knows not how to hinder the strong Impressions they make upon us. How many Men are thus engaged in Duels, who go into the Field deploring this wretched Custom, and condemning themselves for following it ? And yet they have not the Courage to slight the Opinion of those Fools, with whom they should pass for Cowards if they dared do what Reason directed. How many ruine themselves by foolish Expences, and are brought to extreme Misery ; because they cannot bear up against that mistaken Shame of not doing like others ? What is there more easie than to convince Men of the Vanity

of those things that inveagle them in the World? And yet notwithstanding these Convictions, the Phantome of Reputation; the I know not what of Beauty; the Chimæra of Honour and Place, posselles and disposes of them, tumbles and turns them. Because their Mind hath no Strength nor Stability, is of no Solidity nor Weight, but a Straw, a Feather, that the least Puff carries away with it.

L.

What should one think of a Soldier, who being assured, that in a Mock-Battle at a Muster, all the Cannons and Muskets were charged with Powder only, and could do no Harm; and that neither Swords nor Guns were meant there for Execution, could not yet forbear to drop down his Head at every Discharge of a Musket, and run away at the first Sword he saw glitter? Might one not say, that this Cowardice was but a very little Remove from Folly? And yet we all do the same every Day; we are certain, that the Talk and Opinions of Men cannot hurt, no more than help  
us:

us: That they cannot take from us the least Good we possess, nor ease us of the least Evil we suffer: And yet this Breath is able to shake us, and force the Mind from its Station. A wry Look, or an ill Humour, puts us out of Patience; we bristle up against it, and rouse our selves as if it were to some terrible Encounter; we are perfect Children; we must be flatter'd and caressed to be kept in Humour. Let but another Frown ever so little upon us, how unable or unwilling soever he be to hurt us, we, great Babies, set up our Throats as well as the little ones, and there is no Difference between us and them, but in the Manner of our Out-cries,

## LI.

'Tis certain, that the Peevishness, which Men shew on such Occasions, rises from some foolish Passion, which is concerned in the Things that disturb them. But these Passions spring from the Weakness of our Minds, and the little Reliance they have on real and solid Good. The better to understand this, we ought to consider, that

as we think it no Weakness in our Bodies, to stand in need of the Earth to support them, it being the natural Condition of all Bodies: But then we begin to conclude them infirm, when they need borrowed Helps, when they must be carried, and cannot move without Crutches, and the least Wind makes them reel and tumble. So also it is not a Weakness in the Mind to have need of something substantial and solid to rest it self on, and not to be able to subsist, as a Thing poised in the Air, without laying hold on any Object; or, if it be one, it is a Weakness so essential to the Condition of a Creature, which being not Self-sufficient, is under a Necessity to seek abroad for that Support which it cannot find in it self. But the true Weakness of the Mind consists in this, that it settles it self upon Shadows and Nothing, as the Scripture says, and not upon Things of Substance and Reality: Or, if it does place its Reliance on Truth, this Truth alone serves not its Turn; but it needs still a Thousand other Props, which, if taken away, it falls presently and is dejected. Its Weakness lies  
in



in this, that the least Blast is able to shake it, and force it from its Rest; the least Trifle to amaze and discompose, to disturb and torment it: that it cannot resist the Impressions of a Thousand things, which it knows it self to be insignificant, false, and nothing.

## LII.

This is the Picture in little of the Weakness of Man, and it may not be amiss to view it by Pieces, and consider severally the particular Lineaments of it. Though Man cannot find in this Life perfect Rest, yet 'tis certain his Mind is not always disturbed, always sinking. It finds some Pauses, and is by Necessity forced into a kind of Settleness; for being so weak and inconstant, that it cannot bear a perpetual Agitation, it is often wearied into Rest. Time allays the greatest Sufferings, and abates the Sense of them, and by degrees they vanish; Poverty, Shame, Sickness, Distress, Loss of Children, Relations or Friends give us but transient Shocks: And that Emotion of Mind they produce

duce in us, decays by little and little, till at last it comes to Nothing. The Mind then at last finds some sort of Quiet ; and 'tis the common Lot of Men at some time or other of their Lives, to be tumbled into a quiet and easie Posture. But this State of Tranquillity is so weak, so unassured, that the least Matter is sufficient to disturb it. The Reason whereof is, that Man supports not himself by fixing on some solid Truth he clearly understands ; but rests himself upon Variety of slender Props, and is as it were held up by an infinite Number of small and fine Threads, fastened to as many empty Bubbles that depend not on him ; so that some of them always failing, as often as any one breaks, he falls a little, receives a Jolt, and that discomposes him. We bear our selves upon the little Circle of those Friends and Admirers we get about us ; for of these every one desires, and few fail, to be provided. Some rely on the Love and Obedience of their Servants, and some on the Favour and Protection of their Superiors ; some stretch themselves at Ease on Pleasure, Diversion, and  
Com-

Commendation ; and some are carried in the Stream of little Successes : Our Employments that take up our Thoughts, the Hopes we entertain, the Designs we lay, and the Business we undertake, make Part of our Supports : And a Garden, a Country-House, or a Closet of Curiosities, are Places of our Repose. To conclude, 'tis wonderful how many things the Mind lays hold on, and how many little Props it hath need of to keep it quiet.

## LIII.

We perceive not our Dependence on these things, whilst they are in our Possession ; but when they come to fail, as it often happens, we find by our Trouble and Dejection, that we were really fastened to them. The Breaking of a Glass discomposes us. Did not our Quiet then depend on it? A false and ridiculous Censure, some idle Fellow has passed on us, vexes us at heart, and galls us to the quick. The Esteem then of that Fellow contributed to our Tranquillity? that supported, that held us up without our perceiving it.

## LIV.

## LIV.

We are not only in a constant need of these vain Supports; but our Weakness is so great, that they are not able to keep us up long: We are forced to change them often, our Weight would else break them. When Birds are up in the Air, they cannot stay there without Motion, and hardly in the same Place; because that which bears them up is not solid; and besides, they have not in themselves Strength and Vigour enough to keep themselves from falling. They must constantly be changing of Place, and by repeated Stroaks on the Air, hinder themselves from sinking by their own Weight; but as soon as they cease to practise that Slight Nature hath taught them, they tumble down like other heavy Bodies. The Weakness of our Minds makes a just Parallel to this; we soar aloft upon the Opinions of Men, on the Pleasures of Sense, and on humane Comforts; this is the Air we tower in, on this gentle Gale we bear ourselves up; but because there is no Solidity in these things,

things, if we cease to keep our selves in Motion, and do not waft our selves from one Object to another, we sink into Sadness and Dejection of Mind ; one single Object is not enough to keep up our Spirits : 'Tis by a continual fleeting, that the Mind preserves it self in a Condition somewhat tolerable, and hinders it self from being overwhelmed with Weariness and Discontent ; so that it is but by a Slight that it subsists. The Tendency of its own Weight is towards Despondency and Despair, the Center of corrupted Nature is Hell and Fury. We struggle and bustle all we can in this Life, to keep out of it ; but at last our Strength fails, our Weight prevails, Death comes, and we tumble into this Abyss of Misery ; if God, by his Almighty Grace, hath not put into us another Principle, another Tendency, which raises us up towards Heaven.

## LV.

'Tis no less true of the Will of Man, considered in its self, without God's Assistance, than of his Understanding, that what seems great in it is Nothing  
but



but Weakness, and that the Names of Strength and Courage, by which we extol certain Actions and Dispositions of the Soul, conceal under them the greatest Baseness and the vilest Cowardice; what we take for Incurſion, is running away; what we call Elevation, is a Fall; and our Stability is mere Levity. The Steadiness and Resolution that appears in Men on some Occasions is but the Stiffness of a Humour, the Toatness of a Footbal, produced by the Gusts of their Passions, which swell and blow them up. These Gusts toss them sometimes upwards, sometimes downwards; but both above and below they are equally light, equally feeble.

## LVI.

What is it carries so many Men to the Profession of Arms, attended with so many unavoidable Dangers and Hardships? Is it the Design they have to serve their King and Country? that's a thing which, for the most part, they never think on. 'Tis their Aversion to an orderly Course of Life. 'Tis to avoid taking Pains  
in

in an honest Calling, suitable to their Condition. 'Tis the Love of the licentious Part of a Soldier's Life: 'Tis the Weakness of their Minds, and the Illusion of their Imaginations, which flatters them with false Hopes; and hiding from them all the Evils they are running into, makes them a lively Representation of those they would shun.

## LVII.

Think not that the daring Man, who goes so boldly to the Assault, doth seriously contemn Death, or well consider the Justice of the Cause he fights in. He is full of the Dread of what People would think of him, should he turn his Back. 'Tis the Opinion of the World that pushes him on, that drives him like an Enemy at his Heels, and suffers him to think of Nothing else. Behold there the Source of all that great Courage.

## LVIII.

'Tis a Pleasure to consider these Men of Courage, who pass for the great

great Examples of humane Power and Gallantry in those Parts of their Lives, where that Gale failed them, which carried them on in their most pompous and splendid Actions. For there you shall see those pretended Heroes, who seem'd to defie Death, and laugh at all its Terrors, overthrown by the slightest Accidents, and brought to a shameful Confession of their Weakness. Look on *Alexander*, who made the whole World tremble, who had so often braved Death in the Field: Look on him in *Babylon*, seized by a mortal Sickness. Death no sooner appeared barefaced to him, but instantly his Palace is filled with Wizards and Prophetesses, with Priests and Sacrifices. There was no sort of Superstition, wherein he did not seek Refuge against that Death which threatned him, and which at last took him away, after it had cow'd him with its bare Looks, and brought him down to the greatest Meanness. Could he more clearly have demonstrated, that when he made Shew of contemning Death, 'twas only, that he thought himself far enough from it, and that the Heat that then transported him, raised a  
Mist

Mist before his Eyes, which hindered the Sight of it!

## LIX.

Let us not imagin, that there was more of true Strength in those of the Heathens, who seem to have been all of a Piece, and who, in Appearance, died with as much Courage as they lived; with what pompous Elogies forever they set off the Death of *Cato*, it was really Nothing but Weakness that carried him to that brutish Action which they cry up as the highest Piece of Generosity. This *Cicero* plainly discovers, when he says, ' That *Cato* ought to die, rather than see the Face of the Tyrant. 'Twas then the Fear of seeing *Cæsar's* Face, that inspir'd him with this desperate Resolution, to see himself brought under one, he had endeavoured to ruin; to see *Cæsar* Triumph over his fruitless Opposition, were Things would not down with him; and 'twas but to seek in Death a vain Retreat from the Idea of *Cæsar* victorious, that carried him to this Attempt, against all the Laws of Nature and Reason. *Seneca*, that  
does

does idolize him, shews too, he had no other Motive, when he makes him say, ‘ Since the Affairs of Man-kind are past Help, let us put *Cato* out of Danger. He thought not then but of his own Security. He dreamt of Nothing but to put out of his Sight an Object which his Weakness could not bear; so that instead of saying with *Seneca*, ‘ That he turned out into Liberty his generous Spirit; that contemned all humane Power; we may say, That his own pitiful Weakness sunk him under the Dread of an Object which all the Women and Children of *Rome* endured without Trouble. The Terror whereof was so great upon him, that, through the blackest Crime, he forced his way out of the World to get from it.

## LX.

The Deaths of some others, that have been more sedate, and less canting, may seem more generous; but yet all that Tranquillity was little worth; since it was founded only in Ignorance and Blindness. *Socrates* believed that his Death ought not to afflict him; be-



because, said he, ' I know not whether it be a Good or an Evil. This kind of reasoning makes it clear, that he had very weak Apprehensions of that State ; for is it not a dreadful Calamity, when one is just entering into a State, that will last eternally, not to know whether it will be happy or miserable ? Is it not a monstrous Insensibility, not to be moved at this frightful Uncertainty ; and to be able, when one is just on the Brink of this Gulf, and upon the Point of making the Trial, to take Pleasure in discoursing with ones Friends, and to be delighted in that vain Satisfaction there is in the Discovery of those Thoughts of Esteem and Affection one perceives in them ? And yet therein you have all that took up the Mind of *Socrates*.

LXI.

If the Virtues, purely humane, are but Weaknesses, what shall we say of Mens Vices ? What greater Weakness can there be than that of an ambitious Man, who engages himself in a Thousand Quarrels, and a Thousand Dangers, in jostling for Precedency ;  
and

and sacrifices all his Quiet, all the real and solid Advantages of Life, to his Impatience of seeing another in empty Title or Station above him? How much Weakness is there in that Vanity which makes us take Pleasure in a Thousand ridiculous Things which we know to be so? Who is there that is not convinced of the Meanness it is to think the better of himself for being well clad, for being able to set an Horse gracefully, to strike a Ball dexterously, or for having an handsome Gate? And yet how few are there in the World, that do not pride themselves when they perceive they are taken Notice of for any of these Qualities?

## LXII.

What a Weakness is it, that makes us find so much Relish in the Diversions of the World? Can there be a greater debasing of the Mind, than to fix it wholly on the Feet, and to leave it no other Thought, but how to regulate their Motion by the Cadence of an Instrument: or to have it wholly taken up in following Beasts that  
run

run after other Beasts? Nevertheless these are the great Recreations of Princes; and in thus banishing all rational Thoughts, and applying the Mind to some gross, empty, useless Object, consists the Pleasure of all sorts of Games. Men are the more satisfied the less they do like Men. Those Actions, wherein Reason bears a Part, are irksome to them. The Inclination of Man carries him downwards, to bring himself as near as he can to the Condition of a Beast.

## LXIII.

However Man dissembles his own Weakness all he can, he fails not yet to feel it sufficiently. He endeavours to find for it all the Remedies possible; but in his Choice of them, he is so much in the Dark, that he makes the Matter worse rather than better. The Aim of the Ambitious and Voluptuous, is, to shoare up their Weakness with borrowed Props, which the one hopes to find in Pleasure, the other under the Trappings of Authority. They both seek to supply their Wants, but with equal Disappointment; for they only

only encrease them, and by adding to their Necessities, augment their own Weakness. That which puts the Distinction betwixt Angels and us, says St. *Chrysostome*, is, ' That they are ' not pressed with Wants as we are. So that he that has fewest Wants, comes nearest the State of an Angel; and the more are our Necessities, the greater our Distance from it. Now the Ambitious and Voluptuous are more beset with Wants than others. ' He that hath need of many things, ' says the same Father, is a Slave to ' many Things. He is a Servant of his Servants, and depends on them more than they on him. His Servants go where they please without him, whereas he dares not stir out, either in Town or Country, without a Train of Followers, for fear of being ridiculous. Thus the Increase of the Riches and Honour of this World does but put us into a Condition of greater Servitude and Dependence, and bring us into a more substantial Misery.

## LXIV.

Let us not then look for any Strength in the Nature of Man ; on what Side soever we take a View of him, we shall find in him nothing but Weakness and Infirmary ; we ought to seek for it only in God, and the Power of his Grace : 'Tis he alone can enlighten his Darkness, strengthen his Will, sustain his Life as long as he pleases, and at last change all the Infirmities of his Body and Soul into an Estate of eternal Glory and Establishment. All that hath been said of Man's Weakness, serves only to magnifie the Power of that Grace which upholds him ; for what Force ought it to have to inable a Creature so corrupt, so feeble, so miserable, to conquer him and the Devil ; to raise himself above all transitory Things, and make him triumph over the World and all that is deceitful, bewitching, or terrible in it.

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But



## LXV.

But if it be true, that nothing more discovers the Power of Grace than the Weakness of Man, we may also say, that nothing shews the Weakness of Man so much as the Grace of God, and those Assistances he gives him : And that the Infirmities of Nature are, in some Respects, more visible in those whom God hath most favoured with his Grace. It is not so strange, that those who are surrounded with Darkness, who know neither what they are, nor what they are about ; who follow nothing but the Impressions of their Senses, and the Whimsies of their own Imaginations, should prove inconstant, light and weak in the Conduct of themselves ; but who would not believe, that those whom God hath enlighten'd from above, to whom he hath discovered the twofold End, the double Eternity of Happiness or Misery, to which they are going ; who have their Minds filled with those great and astonishing Objects of Hell, Heaven, Angels and Devils, and God himself dying

ing for them ; who have not only entertained the Belief of these things, but have had them sink deep into their Hearts ; who have preferr'd God to all things on Earth, knowing well that they are all but vain, empty Nothings. I say, who would not think that such as these should be utterly uncapable of being moved by any of the Trifles of this World ! Nevertheless it is otherwise with them. Their Hearts cease not to be still very sensible of the smallest Matters. An ill Look, an uncivil Word puts them out of Order, they sometimes yeild under the slightest Temptation, at the same Time that God hath given them the Grace to surmount the greatest. They still find themselves liable to a Thousand Passions, to a Thousand unreasonable Thoughts, and irregular Motions. The Follies of the World get Entrance, and disturb them in their most serious Meditations. If they fall not directly into great Crimes, they feel in themselves a Bias that hangs on that Side, and gives them a Tendency that Way ; and they perceive that they have not any Strength of their own, to hin-

der themselves from tumbling down that Precipice to which their natural Inclination, if God should leave them to themselves, would certainly carry them.

## LXVI.

So then they are these properly, who are sensible of their own Poverty, and can say with the Prophet, *I the Man, seeing my Poverty.* The Men of the World are poor and feeble, without perceiving it. A Man feels not his Inability to stand, when he lies on the Ground. 'Tis by setting ourselves to stem a Torrent, which is carrying us away, that we come to know the Force of it. There are none then, but good Men, that can well know their own Weakness; because they alone do their Endeavours to master it. And though they do really get the better of it in Occasions of most Importance, it is yet with so much Imperfection, so many Failings, and they have still before their Eyes so many other Cases, wherein they falter, that they find no Reason but to be the more convinced of their Misery.

LXVII.

## LXVII.

It is not only those then who are most in the Dark, the most imperfect, and those who pass under the Name of Weak, who ought to say to God, *Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak*; but even the strongest and most perfect, those who have received from him the greatest Assistance of Light and Grace; for the proper Effect of that Light is, to make greater Discoveries, and give them a greater Sense of their Meanness and Misery: To make them acknowledge before God, that there is nothing but Darkness in their Understandings, Weakness and Inconstancy in their Wills, and that their Life is but a Shadow that passes, a Vapour that flies away. This Light makes them cry out with the Prophet, *My Substance is as Nothing before thee*, and taking from them all Confidence in their own Strength, making them vile and nothing in their own Eyes, fills them at the same Time with Admiration of the Almighty Power of God, and the unfathomable Depths of his Wisdom; makes

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them also throw themselves into his Arms, with an humble Confidence and Acknowledgments, that he alone is able to support them amidst so many Infirmities, so much Weakness. He alone can deliver them from so many Evils, and give them Victory over so many Enemies: And finally, that 'tis in him alone they find that Light, Health and Strength, which is not to be found either in themselves or in any of the Creatures about them.

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## DISCOURSE III.

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Concerning the Way of preserving Peace with Men.

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### P A R T I.

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*Seek the Peace of the City, whither I have made you to go, and pray for it to the Lord; for in the Peace of it you shall have Peace.*

#### I.

**A**LL the Societies, of which we make a Part; all People, with whom we have any Commerce or Connexion; every Thing that hath to do with us, or wherewith we have to do, and

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whose different Changes are capable to have any Influence on the Temper of our Minds, are as so many Cities, where we pass our Pilgrimage; for there it is that our Mind finds both its Business and Repose. The World then is our City, and, as Inhabitants of it, we have Intercourse with all Mankind, and do receive from them Advantages or Inconveniencies. The *Hollanders* have a Trade with *Japan*, we with *Holland*, and so have a Commerce with those People at the farthest End of the World; because the Profit the *Hollanders* draw from thence has an Influence on us; since it furnishes them with the Means of doing us the more Good or Harm. The same may be said of all other Nations, they are linked to us on one Side or other, and all enter into that Chain which ties the whole Race of Men together by their mutual Wants.

## II.

We are by a nearer Tie yet Denisons of the Country where we were born and live, of the Town where we dwell, and more particularly Members  
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of the Society of which we are. And to conclude, we are in some Sense Citizens of our selves, and of our own Hearts, where our divers Passions and multitude of Thoughts are the People with whom we are to converse. And oftentimes it is easier to live with all the exterior World, than it is with this interior People we carry about with us, these Inhabitants of our selves. The Scripture, that requires us to seek the Peace of that City where God hath placed us, means equally all these several sorts of Cities, *i. e.* it obliges us to seek and desire the Peace of the whole World, of our own Country, of the Place of our Dwelling, of our Society, and of our selves; but since we have more Power to procure it in some than in others, of these we ought to apply our selves to it in a different Manner.

III.

We have no other way ordinarily to procure the Peace of the World, of Kingdoms, and of Cities, than by our Prayers. And therefore in these Cases, we ought sincerely to beg it of

Almighty God, and to believe it our Duty so to do. The publick Troubles of divided Kingdoms coming often from the little Care those who make a Part of them have to pray to God for Peace; and the little Return they make to him, of Thanks and Acknowledgment, when he has bestowed it on them. *St. Paul* therefore exhorting us to pray for the Kings of this World, expressly mentions, as one Reason of this Obligation, the need we have our selves of external Tranquillity; *That we may live a peaceable and quiet Life.*

## IV.

We procure our own Peace within, by governing well our Thoughts and Passions; and by this internal Peace, establish'd in our selves, we contribute to the Quiet of the Society we live in, there being little else besides our Passions that disturbs us; but this Peace with Men, with whom we have a nearer Union, and a more frequent Conversation, being of mighty Importance for the Preservation of our Peace within; and there being no thing.

thing so apt to trouble our Quiet as Quarrels and Divisions, we have Reason to look on this Sort of Peace, as principally intended in that Direction of the Prophet: *Seek the Peace of that City whither I have made you to go.*

## V.

Men ordinarily, in the Conduct of their Lives, govern themselves neither by Faith nor Reason; but heedlessly give themselves up to the Impressions of Objects, that come in their way, or the received Opinions of those with whom they converse; and there are very few that set themselves seriously to consider what may conduce to make their Lives happy, either before God, or before the World. If they would but think a little on it, they would find that Faith and Reason are agreed in the greatest Part of the Actions and Duties of Men: That those Courses, from which Religion would take us off, are generally as opposite to our Quiet in this World, as to our Felicity in the other; and most of those things it leads us to, contribute more to our temporal Happiness, than  
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all that our Ambition and Vanity makes us so eagerly pursue.

## VI.

Now this Consent of Faith and Reason, appears not more in any thing, than our Obligation to live at Peace with those with whom we have to do, and to avoid all Occasions of Disturbance; for Religion teaches it as an essential Duty of Christian Piety; and Reason presses it as most necessary to our particular Interests.

## VII.

If we consider, with any Attention, the Rise of most of the Quarrels that happen to our selves or others, we shall find, that they spring commonly from our indiscreet stirring of other Mens Passions. And Justice will make us confess, that 'tis very seldom any one speaks ill of us without Cause, or takes Pleasure to abuse or offend us for Naught; we our selves always contribute to it. And though there appear no immediate Cause, we shall find that we, at a Distance, were

were the Occasion ; we dispose Men, by little Indiscretions, to take amiss those things which they would easily endure, if there lay not some Grudge at Heart that made them touchy. In short, it is almost universally true, that if any one loves us not, 'tis because we have not the Skill to make our selves beloved.

## VIII.

We then our selves, by our own Faults, help to produce those Disquiets, Crosses, and Troubles that others bring upon us ; which being the greatest Evils of our Lives, it imports us above all things, even according to the Rule of worldly Wisdom, to do our utmost to avoid them, by taking Care not to give Offence to others. The Science, which teaches us to do this, is a Thousand Times more useful than all those which Men bestow so much Time and Pains upon. We have Reason therefore to bewail the wrong Choice we make in our Studies, of Art and Sciences, and other Accomplishments ; we take great Care to understand Matter, and to find ways

ways how to apply it to our Purposes and Occasions. We learn the Art of taming Beasts, and making them serve to the Uses of Life; but never bethink our selves, how Men may be made useful to us, nor how to hinder them from giving us Trouble, and making our Lives uncomfortable: Though Men alone contribute to our Happiness or Misery, not only more than other Animals, but even more than the whole visible Creation besides.

## IX.

This is the Advice of Reason in the Case; but if we will consult Faith and Religion, they enforce this Duty yet stronger upon us, with Reasons and Arguments of divine Authority; our Saviour hath bestowed on Peace two Beatitudes, declaring the Meek and Pacifick both blessed; and promising to the Meek the Possession of the Earth, which contains the Quiet of this Life, and the rest of the other. And to the Peace-Makers, that *they shall be called the Children of God*; which is the highest Quality Man is capable of, and consequently

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belongs to the greatest Virtue. St. Paul publishes a Law expressly concerning Peace, commanding, that *as much as in us lies, we keep Peace with all Men.* He forbids Strife and Contentions, and enjoins Patience and Gentleness towards all the World ; and declares, that the Spirit of Contention was not that of the Church. There are few Precepts so often inculcated, by the wise Man, as those which concern the regulating our selves in our Conversation with others, and the avoiding the Occasions of Divisions and Quarrels ; 'tis with an Eye to this, that he tells us, *that soft Words multiply our Friends, and appease our Enemies, and that a good Man abounds in Courtesie.* In another Place he informs us, that *a soft Answer turns away Wrath, and sharp Words stir up Anger.* And that *a wise Man makes himself beloved by his Words.* And to conclude, he extols this Virtue to that Degree, that he calls it the Tree of Life ; because it procures us Quiet both in this Life and the other : *A peaceable Tongue is the Tree of Life.*

## X.

He would also have us understand, that the Advantages this Virtue procures us in making us beloved are to be preferr'd to those which Men most set their Hearts on, *viz.* Honour and Glory; for that is the Meaning of these Words, *My Son, do thy Works in Meekness, and thou shalt be beloved above the Praise of Men*: There are two Things chiefly, which Men desire to receive from others, Love and Honour; Honour is founded on the Idea of some Excellence, and Love on the Idea of Goodness, which manifests it self in a gentle Carriage and sweet Disposition. Now the wise Man teaches us, that though the Esteem of Men sooth our Vanity more, yet it is much better to be beloved; because Glory or Esteem places us but in their Opinions; but Love opens, and gives us Entrance into their Hearts. Esteem is often attended with Envy and Jealousie; but Love ties up all the ill-natured Passions, which are those that trouble our Quiet.



## XI.

One might draw out of Scripture an infinite Number of Reasons, to persuade us, *as much as in us lies, to keep Peace with all Men*; there is nothing so conformable to the Spirit of the new Law, as the Practice of this Duty, to which, as one may say, the very Essence of it presses us; for whereas Lust, that is, the Law of the Flesh, is the great Makebate of the World, which, by putting Man at Variance with God, sets him at odds also with himself, by making his Passions mutiny against his Reason; and with all other Men; since it makes him their Enemy, and would make him their Tyrant. On the contrary, the Business of Charity, which is the new Law that Jesus Christ came to bring into the World, is, to make up all those Breaches which Sin hath caused; to reconcile us to God, by submitting us to his Law; to reconcile us to Men, by taking away the Desire of domineering over them; and lastly, to reconcile us to our selves, by subjecting our  
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Passions to our Reason: Now one of the principal Effects of this Charity, in which consists the Law of Grace, is to make us careful to keep Peace with our Neighbours: It being impossible that Charity should be lively and sincere in our Hearts, without producing this Caution in our Actions; we are naturally fearful to offend those we love, and do not easily take Offence at them; Charity makes us look on the Faults we commit against others as great and important, and their Trespases against us as small and inconsiderable. By this Means it stops the ordinary Source of Contention; most of our Quarrels rising only from false Ideas, which make the Injuries we suffer appear great in our Eyes, and those we do, very little.

## XII.

'Tis impossible to love others without an Inclination to serve them; and impossible to serve them, without being Friends with them; this internal Peace being the first Disposition that makes them capable of receiving any Benefit from our Words or Actions;  
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so that the same Duty, which, according to the Scripture, gives us Charge of other Men, to serve them all the ways we can, obliges us also to live peaceably with them; for Peace is the Door of the Heart, Aversion shuts it against us, and makes the Mind inaccessible. 'Tis true, one has not always Opportunity to benefit others by edifying Discourses; but there are many other ways of being useful besides Talking; we may serve them by our Silence. The Example of our Patience, Modesty, and other Virtues, may be profitable to them; but it is Peace alone that opens their Hearts, and must make way for any Advantage they can receive from us.

XIII.

Charity closes not only with all Men, but at all Times; wherefore we are obliged to be at Peace with all Men at all Times; for there is no Moment wherein we are not to do our Part, to remove their Shiness or Aversion, the great Obstacles which may be in the way of our Love and Service, which we constantly owe them;

them ; so that even whilst we cannot have an internal Peace with them, which consists in Unity of Judgment and Opinion, we may take Care not to fail in any Circumstance of outward Civility, and thereby maintain a fair Correspondence, and so keep our selves in a Capacity of serving them more effectually another Day. And in the mean time manifest to Almighty God the Sincerity of our Desires to do so.

## XIV.

If we do not actually do them good, we ought to forbear at least doing them any harm ; now it is really Harm, by any Provocation, to make them have hard Thoughts of us, and grow into a Coldness towards us. 'Tis really to hurt them, by any Breach to dispose them to take amiss all our Words and Actions, and to put an ill Construction on them, whereby they wound their Consciences. And to conclude, they are really hurt, when the Distance that is kept up between us, makes them dislike even Truth that comes from our Mouths, and oppose.

pose Right it self, when we appear for it.

## XV.

The Interest then of Truth, as well as of our Neighbour, obliges us not to provoke him against us. If we have a Kindness for Truth, we ought to beware how we render it odious by our ill Carriage, and shut Mens Ears against it, by shutting their Hearts against our selves. 'Tis also to caution us of this Mistake, that the Scripture tells us, *That the Wise adorn Knowledge*, i. e. That they render it amiable to Men, and that the Esteem which they gain themselves, sets off Truth with more Advantage, and gives Credit to what they say: When, on the contrary, those who have drawn on themselves Contempt or Hatred, involve Truth in the same Disgrace: The Contempt or Hatred of the Person usually extending it self to his Discourse.

## XVI.



## XVI.

'Tis not to be expected that good Men should be always at Peace in the World: Our Saviour Christ hath warn'd them not to hope for better Usage than he himself found; therefore St. Paul, exhorting us to *keep Peace with Men*, adds this Restriction, *as much as is possible*, knowing certainly that it was not always possible: That there were some Occasions wherein it was unavoidable to give them Offence, by not giving way to their Passions; but to the End this may not be unprofitably done, and to secure us from the just Apprehension that we may have contributed to the ill Consequences that sometimes attend such Oppositions, it concerns us carefully to avoid all idle Contentions, all Offences in matters of small Moment; it being infallibly true, that he alone can, with Success, reprove others, who uses to indulge them as much as is possible.

XVII

## XVII.

St. Peter knowing well that ill Treatment and Persecutions would certainly fall to their Lot, exhorts Christians to take heed, that they *suffered not as Evil-Doers or Murderers*. The same may be said to them in our present Case: That since it is impossible but that they should incur the Displeasure of Men, they ought to take exceeding great Care, that they draw it not on themselves, by their own Imprudence and Miscarriages; thereby losing the Benefit of their Sufferings.

## XVIII.

Brotherly Correction is a Duty expressly injoin'd us in the Gospel, and under a strict Obligation; and yet it is certain, there are very few are able to practise it successfully, and without doing more Harm than Good to those they reprove; nevertheless we are not to believe, that they are thereby discharged from their Duty; for as a Man, who, by his own Fault, hath  
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put himself in an Incapacity of doing Acts of Charity. to the Body of his Neighbour, is not therefore blameless before God, who lays this Failure to his Charge ; so likewise we are not to think our selves free from Guilt, when our neglect of a peaceable Conversation with our Neighbour, has put us out of a Condition to exercise a more spiritual part of Charity, in doing Good to his Soul, by an effectual Reprehension.

## XIX.

Besides, our own spiritual Concernment and the Charity we owe our selves, ought to keep us from all things that may set us at odds with others, or procure us their Hatred or Neglect, it being the readiest way to abate or destroy in our selves the Charity we should have for them. It is very difficult to keep up a warm Kindness for those in whom we observe nothing but Coldness, or even Aver-sion for us. And he that hath cool'd the Affection of another, is gone a good way towards the allaying and extinguishing his own.

## XX.

## XX.

But the Difficulty lies not in being convinced of the Necessity of keeping fair with one's Neighbour, but in putting effectually in Practice, and actually avoiding those Things that may set us at Variance with him. 'Tis true, nothing but an overflowing Charity can produce this great Effect; but amongst the natural Means, that may conduce to it, there seems to me none more proper than to study the ordinary Causes of Divisions amongst Men; that being known, they may be the better prevented. Now considering them in general, one may say, that Distance grows not between Men, but when either we give Offence, which makes others separate from us; or else taking Exceptions at some Words or Actions of theirs, we withdraw our selves from them, and quit their Friendship: In both Cases it happens, that the Bond of Peace is sometimes violently broken by an open Rupture; sometimes it is insensibly untwisted by a growing Coldness; but however they chance to operate,

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these Provocations on both Sides are the Causes that make the Breach, and undermine our Charity; the only Means we have to avoid the Mischief is, as I have said, not to give the least Offence to others, nor to take any Offence at what they do to us.

## XXI.

There is nothing easier than to agree on this general Rule, nothing harder than to observe it in particular Cases; it is one of those that are short in Words, large in Sense, and comprehend under them a great Number of very important Duties. It may not be amiss therefore to open it a little, and observe more particularly what is to be done to avoid offending others, and to put our own Minds in a Posture wherein they may, unmoved, bear any Shock from the Words or Actions of other Men.

## XXII.

The Way to succeed, in the first Part of this Rule, which is not to offend others, is to know what it is that



that provokes them, and what it is gives that Impression which causes Difference and Aversion, which is the Offence we are speaking of. If one examines the divers Causes that are apt to have this Effect, one shall find they may be reduced to these Two Heads, *viz.* Contradicting their Opinions, or crossing their Passions; but since there is great Variety in this, and the Opinions and Inclinations of Men are very different, and Men themselves much more touchy in some than others; we must look a little farther, and consider more particularly, what are the Persuasions, with the Passions, that are most dangerous to be medled with.]

## XXIII.

Men are naturally fond of their Opinions, being forward to hug whatever may help them to any kind of Superiority or Sway over others, which is a thing they are always hankering after. There is a Shew of Authority in dogmatizing, and 'tis a kind of Empire, to bring others to our Persuasion; so that the Opposition that is raised by Disputes offends,

us proportionably as we affect this sort of Dominion. *Man rejoices in the Notions which he utters*, says the Scripture; for by uttering them, he owns them to be his; he makes them part of his Possessions, and it becomes his Interest to maintain them. To destroy them, is to destroy something that belongs to him, which cannot be done without shewing him that he is deceived; and he is never pleas'd with that Prospect: Whoever contradicts another, pretends to have more Insight in the Question than he that holds the contrary; and so suggests at the same time Two very ungrateful Ideas, one, that he wants Knowledge; the other, that his Opponent hath more Understanding; the one whereof humbles him, and the other provokes him, and stirs up both his Anger and Jealousie. These Effects make the deeper and more lively Impressions, proportionably as that Ambition is the more vigorous and active. And there is scarce any Body so mortified in this Part, as not to be sensible of Contradiction, and that can bear it without some degree of Displeasure.

## XXIV.

Besides this general Cause, there are several other particular Reasons that make Men concerned for their Opinions, and impatient of Contradiction. One would think Religion, which is wont to lessen our Esteem of our selves, and suppress the Desire of having an Ascendant over the Minds of others, should render us less conceited of our own Persuasions; but we often find the contrary; for since devout Persons apply all to spiritual Purposes, and do notwithstanding sometimes mistake, it happens that thereby they advance Errors into Points of Religion; and having dressed up their false or ill grounded Opinions, with Reasons of Conscience, they grow very fond and tenacious of them; so that the Love they have in general for Truth, Virtue, and the Glory of God, being misapplied to Tenets, they have not well examined, stirs up their Zeal against those who oppose or question them. And those Remains of irregular Desires, which are yet left in them, mingling with

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their Heats of Zeal, break out with the greater Liberty; because they are under no Restraint. For not perceiving this double Motion of their Hearts, they suspect not their Zeal to have any other Original but those spiritual Considerations wherewith their Minds are more sensibly affected and principally taken up.

## XXV.

'Tis from this secret Fallacy, that we sometimes see very godly Persons so wedded to certain Opinions in Philosophy, though false, that they look down with Pity on all Dissenters, and brand them as Affecters of Novelty, even when they assert nothing but indubitable Truths. There are some who cannot hear you speak against substantial Forms, without being mortally offended: Others are as much concerned for *Aristotle*, and the ancient Philosophers, as they could be for the Fathers of the Church, and Defenders of our Faith. And there are who stand up stily for the Sun, whom they think mightily injured by those, who would have him pass

pass for nothing but an Heap of Dust, violently agitated. None of this springs from Corruption in the Persons of whom I speak; but from spiritual Maxims, which, tho' true in the general, they misapply in particular Cases; one ought to be cautious of Novelty, 'tis true; and 'tis as true, one ought not to be forward to undervalue those who have been long establish'd in an high Degree of Credit, by the common Consent of able Men; but for all this, when the Question is about Things which have no other Rule but Reason, the Truth, once discovered, ought to carry it against all those Maxims, of which the only Use is, to warn us not to suffer our selves to be carried away with light Appearances.

## XXVI.

All those exterior Qualities, which (without improving our Knowledge) help to persuade us that we have Reason on our Side, are apt to make us abound in our own Sense, and impatient of Contradiction. Now there are divers of this sort.



## XXVII.

Those who speak well, and with Ease, are apt to fall in Love with their own Opinions, and do not easily suffer themselves to be undeceived in their Mistakes; because they are forward to think they excel others as much in Understanding as they do in Language. The Exactness of their wording things being visible, whilst their Failings in Knowledge and close Reasoning are concealed from them. Besides, in talking handsomely, they put their Mistakes into so fine a Dress, that they themselves are dazzled with them; whereas those who want Expressions perplex the clearest Truths, and make them look like Errors, and are often forced to yeild, and seem baffled, for want of being ready, with fit Terms, to lay open those glittering Falshoods.

## XXVIII.

That which helps to rivet these fluent Speakers yet faster to their own Opinions, is, that they usually carry the

the Multitude, which never fails to conclude those to have most Reason, who have glibest Tongues. And this publick Approbation coming round to them, makes them judge their own Thoughts most reasonable, as being conformable to the common Apprehensions of Men; so that they are repaid in their own Coin, and are themselves confirmed in their Errors, by those very People whom they had first led out of the way.

## XXIX.

Moderation, Calmness, Modesty, Patience, and other the like exterior Qualities, produce the same Effects; for those that have them, not 'scaping the Knowledge of it, and comparing themselves in this Part with others who have them not, they cannot forbear to allow themselves the Precedency in this Particular, wherein yet they do the others no Injury; but whereas these Advantages are remarkable in them, and gain them Credit and Authority in the World; they thereupon proceed so far as to prefer their own Judgment to theirs.

in whom they see not those Qualities; not by a direct Presumption, that they have a clearer Understanding than those from whom they differ in Opinion; but in a more refined and imperceptible way. For besides the Impressions they receive from the Multitude, whom they mislead by their outward Behaviour; they also let their Thoughts dwell upon the Consideration of those Miscarriages which they observe others guilty of in their way of arguing, and, by degrees, they come insensibly to take them for Marks of a weak Reason.

## XXX.

There are some who, even from the Care they have had to beg of God Knowledge for their Conduct in some difficult Cases, take Occasion to think themselves righter in their Opinions than those whom they have not observed so diligent in their Addresses to Heaven. Not considering that the true Effect of Prayer is, to take us off from too great a Reliance on our own Judgments, and to dispose us the more willingly to be informed by others.

thers. It often happening, that he that comes much short of another in Virtue, may in some Points much exceed him in Knowledge, which yet, by Reason of the ill Use he puts it to, serves the Owner himself to little Purpose; but is wholly designed for the Benefit of some less enlightened Person, who by his Prayer hath obtained an Inclination to learn the Truth, and the Grace to make good Use of it.

XXXI.

Those who have strong Fancies, and very lively Conceptions of things, are subject also to this over-weening in their own Opinions, of which we are speaking; for their Minds being intently fixed on some particular Objects, do not give their Thoughts Compass enough to make a right Judgment; which lies in the comparing several Reasons together. They so wholly fill up their Imaginations with one single Argument, that they have no Room for any other: And just like those who are too near their Objects, see nothing but what is directly before them.

XXXII.

## XXXII.

Upon several of these Accounts it is, that Women, especially Women of Parts, are very positive in their Opinions. Their Understanding is, as one may say, the Understanding of the Imagination, more quick than capacious; what strikes their Fancy, hath them wholly. And as for any thing else, they little mind it. Their fine Tongues and Facility of Language give them Credit and Reputation with others: Their Moderation and Punctuality in Acts of Piety; a Value for themselves; and all concurring to give them a Reverence for their own Opinions, wherein they find nothing that displeases them, they easily become their own Oracles.

## XXXIII.

To conclude, Riches, Power, Authority, and whatsoever lifts Men up in the World, doth insensibly fix them in their Opinions, as well by the Credit and Respect it procures them, which fills them with the Illusion before



fore spoken of : As also because not being used to Contradiction, they grow very tender and very touchy. They being very seldom told that they are mistaken, they accustom themselves to believe that they never are so ; and are strangely surpris'd, when any one goes about to make them see, that they are no more infallible than others.

## XXXIV.

'Twould be a wrong Use of these general Observations, to take an Occasion from them, to conclude in particular every one guilty of this blameable Obstinacy, in whom we find these Qualities which are capable to produce it ; it not being a necessary Effect that flows from them. The right Use of them is, not to suspect or condemn any one as abounding in his own Sense ; but only to resolve with our selves, whenever we have to do with those whose Temper of Mind, or other Qualifications, may dispose them to be conceited of their own Perswasions, whether indeed they are so or no, to keep our selves the more upon

upon our Guard, and not to contest their Opinions without great Reason. This Caution is always good ; for never being prejudicial, it may on some Occasions be very advantageous.

## XXXV.

'Tis farther to be observed, that as there are some Persons not so easie to be contradicted as others ; so there are some Opinions that require us to be more cautious. Such are those which are not the private Tenets of a single Person ; but the publick Doctrines of the Place, established by universal Approbation. Those who will be disputing those Points, seem as if they would set themselves above all their Neighbours, and give Occasion to the Members of the Society, where those Opinions prevail, to interest themselves the more warmly, as believing themselves engag'd in the Defence, not of their own private Judgments, but the Opinion of the whole Community. Now ill Nature shews it self most under the Cover of a fair Pretence, and is then more fierce and bu-  
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into the Shape of Zeal, acting in the Behalf of one's Corporation or Superiours.

## XXXVI.

This Note is of great Moment for the Preservation of Peace; but to comprehend it in its full Latitude, 'tis necessary to add, that in all Corporations, all Societies, there are commonly certain sacred Maxims introduced by the leading Men, whose Authority has a Sway over the Minds of the rest. Those who propose them, have often themselves no very great Reverence for them, judging of them by their Conformity to Reason, which perhaps is not clear in the Point; but the common Herd, taking them wholly upon Trust, swallow them without examining; and having received them as indubitable Maxims, think themselves bound in Honour to maintain them at any Rate. And therefore set themselves with great Heat against those who dare venture to question them. These Opinions and received Maxims, sometimes concern dogmatical Truths, and matter of Speculation;

on; one sort of Philosophy is in Vogue here, and another there. There are Places where all severe Opinions are well thought of; and others, where they are all suspected. Sometimes they concern Persons, and what Esteem they are to be had in, especially in their own Society; for those Oracles of the Company, those in whom the rest pin their Faith, by the Discourses they make of them, assign to every one his Rank and proper Place. This Order the Multitude confirm, who fail not to ratifie the Judgment of their Leaders, which they are always ready to defend.

## XXXVII.

Now whereas the Characters of Men may be mightily mistaken, and those settled Opinions of them very extravagant. It may happen, that some of the same Society may be dissatisfied with them, and look on the Precedency as ill-placed. These, if they be not Masters of much Prudence, and make not use of much Circumspection, to avoid offending those with whom they live, by the Singularity

larity of their Judgments, will hardly scape drawing on themselves the Censure of those, who, not being so clear-sighted, will condemn them as rash and presumptuous. And some Discoveries of their private Opinions, that may slip from them, being extended far beyond what they really think, they will be in Danger to pass for direct Contemners of those whom they only judge something overvalued, and for whom, in their own Thoughts, they have not an Esteem quite equal to that degree of Reputation they possess in the Society.

## XXXVIII.

To avoid these and several other Inconveniencies, which Men run themselves into, by contesting received Opinions, it will not be amiss, in whatever Place or Society one shall be, to make to one's self a Draught of the Opinions and Persons that are in vogue there, and the Rank that every one holds, and to demean one's self accordingly, with all the Compliance that Truth and Charity can allow. 'Tis possible the Opinions may be, many of them



them false, and the Ranking of Persons ill ordered ; but be that as it will, this is certain, that one ought to make it his first Care, not to relie too much on his own Judgment in the Matter ; for if there be in Men a natural Weakness, that disposes them blindly to be led by others, in an implicit Faith ; there is also in them an inbred ill Nature, which makes them forward to contradict the Opinions of those whom they would be glad to lessen. This, of the Two, we ought to keep farthest off from, as proceeding from a greater Corruption of Nature, and tending more to the Disturbance of Society than the other ; so that to suppress this Vice, we ought, as much as we can, to incline to the Opinions of others, to be willing to join in our Approbation, and to take it for granted that they are right ; because they are received.

## XXXIX.

That which raises in us the Spirit of Contradiction is this, That we cannot endure in others Thoughts different from our own, and we are concerned,

not

not because their Opinions are contrary to Truth, but to ours; we would fain be absolute over the Minds of Men, and give Laws to the Opinions of all the World; we have no Desire to benefit those, with whom we thus contest; were that our Design, we should take other Measures, and proceed in another Method; we have a Mind to set our selves above them, and make them vail to our Judgments; or rather, we would in Dispute vent our Spleens, and let loose our Choler upon them, for daring to touch our Darlings, *i. e.* our Opinions. So that in this way of Proceeding, there is a Complication of Pride, that causes these Risings in our Minds, Uncharitableness; that sets us a disputing, only in Revenge and Hypocrisie; that covers these vile Thoughts, under the fair Pretence of Zeal for Truth, and a charitable Desire to undeceive our Neighbour; so that the Saying of the wise Man may be applied to us, *The Admonitions of the Proud are false and deceitful*; not that he always speaks Untruth, but that whilst he pretends to reform and correct, his Business is only to provoke and insult.

## XL.

We ought then to look on this Itch we have to enter the Lists against all, without Distinction, that seems to us false, as a great Infirmary, and a Malady very often worse than the Error we pretend to rectifie in others; so that Charity beginning at home, our first Care ought to be employed there; we should take Pains with our selves, and endeavour to get a Temper of Mind, able to bear with the Opinions and Errors of others without Disturbance. To the End we may never oppose them, but with a sincere Desire, and when there is Hopes of doing Good.

## XLI.

If this be our only Aim, we shall not fail to remember, that though all Errors are evils, yet there are many of them such as we need not trouble our selves about, the Remedy being often worse than the Disease. And that by meddling in smaller Matters, we shut our selves out from the Opportunities of affording Help in Evils of great-  
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er Consequence; hence we see that our Saviour, though as St. John says, full of all Truth, never went about to recal Men from other Errors than such as concerned God or their Salvation. He was not ignorant of their Mistakes in natural things: He understood better than any one wherein consisted true Eloquence, and knew exactly the Truth of all past Occurrences, and yet he gave it not in Charge to his Apostles, to beat down phylosophical Errors; to teach the Art of speaking well, or to undeceive the World in those infinite Mistakes of Matter of Fact, with which their Histories were fill'd.

## XLII.

We are not bound to be more charitable than the Apostles were; when therefore we perceive that, upon our opposing any Opinion, which regards only temporal things, several People take Offence at it, are exasperated, and entertain hard and unjust Thoughts of us, we are not only at Liberty to forbear disputing, but are often obliged to it by the Law of Charity.

## XLIII.

## XLIII.

But in this governing our selves, we must take heed not to practise Moderation by halves ; it is not enough to decline provoking, to their Faces, those whom we think we ought to handle gently ; but we must forbear also to communicate our Thoughts of them to others ; such Discoveries serving only to ease our Minds, and give us an useless Satisfaction. It is commonly more dangerous to whisper to others what we think of Persons in Credit and Authority, and who sit in-thron'd in the Minds of Men, than to speak it out to them themselves. Those to whom one thus lays himself open, having often with less Equity, Understanding, and Charity, and greater Share of blind Zeal and Passion, are apt to be more offended at such Discourses than the Persons themselves that are concerned ; for since there is scarce a Man to be found perfectly stanch ; but all Stories take their round, and come about to the Parties themselves, with Additions that render them more provoking and odious ;  
there



there is scarce any other Fence against these Inconveniencies, but with a general Reservedness to keep our Thoughts concealed from all the World.

## XLIV.

'Tis not easie to forbear communicating to a Confident, the secret Dislike we have of things, which we think not fit to condemn openly. Self-love puts us upon this way of easing our Minds, and every one is willing to have at least one Witness of his Moderation. That malignant Vapour, that inspires us with Contradiction against those Opinions that cross us, being shut up in a Mind not thoroughly mortified, is always struggling to get out: And the Constraint we use upon our selves to keep it in, often encreases the Venom; but the more importunate these untoward Risings are in our Minds, the more we ought to think our selves bound to suppress them; and to believe, that we are but in an ill Posture to busie our selves about others, when we are so much out of Order at home, and have need to employ

employ all our Endeavours about our selves.

## XLV.

Thus if we keep silent those Thoughts which Discretion forbids us to speak, Time will, in due Season, either discover them to be unjust, or bring with it an Opportunity to open them with Advantage, when we follow the Rule of the Scripture, which says, *A good Understanding keeps in its Words till a fit Time, and the Lips of many shall publish its Meaning*; but if these should fail, we are sure yet to enjoy the Blessing of Peace, and the Hopes of a Reward for this Government of our selves: All which, in the other way, we sacrifice to an hasty Humour, and an irregular Inclination.

## XLVI.

If we ought to consider well the Quality, Temper, and Condition of Persons, before we contradict them; we ought much more to consider our selves, and how we stand with them; for since we should never dispute the  
Opini-

Opinions of others, but with a Design of Advantage and Good to them; we ought in the first Place to see, whether we are in a Capacity to do it. Now we cannot attain that End but by Persuasion, and there are but Two ways of persuading others, *viz.* Reason and Authority; let us then examine ourselves what we can do by the one and the other of these. Reason, without doubt, is the less effectual of the Two; and they who have naught to imploy but Argument, must not hope to gain much in the greatest Part of the World, who are lead wholly by Authority. 'Tis in this Particular that we ought well to weigh our Strength; for if one knows, that in the Place or Society where he lives, he hath not Credit enough to dispose Men to think well of Advice, and hearken to the Propositions he makes, and to prevent any ill Consequences of them; he is to believe that God in these Circumstances dispenses with him, and he is not bound to speak his Mind of things he thinks amiss. And that the Duty at present incumbent on him, is Silence only, and Patience. If he take the contrary Course, he will

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only

only make himself be decry'd, hazard himself to no Purpose, and give both others and himself Disturbance.

## XLVII.

*Plato's* Advice, ' Not to attempt  
' any Reformation in the Common-  
' Wealth, farther than the People  
' were like to approve of it, holds  
not only in great States, but less So-  
cieties; and is not only the Thought  
of an Heathen, but a Christian Rule  
given by St. *Augustin*, as absolutely  
necessary to the Government of the  
Church. ' The peaceable Man, says  
that Saint, ' is he that amends, as  
' much as he can, what he finds amiss;  
' and being led by an impartial Judg-  
' ment to dislike in others some things  
' that he cannot remedy, fails not yet  
' to bear with them, with a steady and  
' unshaken Temper. If then this ho-  
ly Man prescribed this gentle Me-  
thod to those who were intrusted  
with the Government of the Church:  
If he would have Peace be their prin-  
cipal Aim, and that they should suffer  
a Thousand Inconveniencies rather  
than hazard that: How much more

is it the Duty of private Men, who are under no other but that common Obligation of all Christians to do to others all the Good they can?

## XLVIII.

As it is Sedition in the Commonwealth, to go about to reform any Disorders, without being in a Station that authorizes us to do it; so 'tis a Kind of Sedition in a private Society, for any particular Member to set himself against the received Opinions of the Place, and by his Opposition disturb the Peace of the Community; this is to be understood only of tolerable Evils, whose Reformation is not worth the Trouble of a Contest; for there are some, where the Opposition even of private Men is absolutely required; but 'tis not of those that I am now speaking.

## XLIX.

But we are not to extend this Rule so far, as universally to make Scruple of declaring our Dissent from some Opinions of those we live with.



Instead of preserving Society, this would be to destroy it; we need this Reserve only in things of greater Moment, and those for which we see others mightily concerned. And even those too there are ways to oppose, in such a Manner, that no Body shall know how to take it amiss. This is the Art we ought particularly to be versed in; it being impossible civil Conversation should be kept up, without frequently owning Difference in Judgment.

## L.

That then which is most useful and best deserves our Care, is, to learn how to discourse our Opinions in a way so mild, so humble, so taking, that no Body may be able to take Offence at them; Men of Business practise this excellently in their Applications to great Men. Their Lusts teach them the Art of it, an Art which we too easily find, were but Charity as active in us as worldly Desires are in them, and could but make us as cautious of offending our Brethren, whom we ought to consider as  
our

our Superiors and Grandees in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, as they are of offending those by whom they hope to better their Fortunes.

## LI.

This Carriage is of so much Moment, and so necessary through the whole Course of our Lives, that we ought, with a particular Care, to apply ourselves to the Practice of it; for ordinarily 'tis not so much our Opinions themselves that disgust others, as the haughty, fierce, insolent, passionate, supercilious, insulting way wherein we propose them; we must learn therefore to contradict with Civility and Submission, and to look on the Faults we make herein as very considerable.

## LII.

It is not easie to set down the several ways there are to contradict another without Offence, and give particular Rules about them. They depend on the Circumstances, and that charitable Fear we have of provoking

others, teaches us to find them; but there are some general Faults, which being the Sources from which our Miscarriages, in this Matter, take their Rise, it will not be amiss to take a View of them, the better to avoid them; the first I call the Ascendant, I mean, an imperious Way of declaring one's Judgment, which displeases every Body, both as proceeding from an haughty and insolent Disposition, a Temper which no Body can away with, and also seeming to assume an Empire over the Minds of the Hearers. This Air is easily known, and it may not be amiss to inquire into the Causes of it.

## LIII.

'Tis one kind of Ascendant, to appear troubled that others do not believe us, and to reproach them for it. Such Reproaches tacitly charging those, with whom we talk, either with Dulness, that lets them not apprehend; or Obstinacy, that lets them not admit our Reasons. This is to usurp an Authority over the Minds of others, and is one sort of Tyranny.

On the contrary, we ought to believe that those who stand out against good Arguments will not be brought over by ill Language; for what can we reasonably hope from our Reproaches, which give no Light to the Debate, carry no other Evidence with them, but that of the good Conceit we have of our selves, that we prefer our Judgment to theirs, and make little Scruple of offending them.

## LIV.

The next Fault is, a positive way of discoursing, when we deliver our Opinions dogmatically, as evident Truths, that cannot with Reason be opposed. This is a Way as provoking as the former, and for the same Reasons.

1. Because we injure those with whom we talk after this Fashion, by making them believe that they question indubitable Truths.

2. Because in this magisterial way of proposing things, we allow not others the Liberty of examining and judging of them by their own Understandings, their own Light, which

is an Usurpation they cannot bear with.

## LV.

To remedy this in the Religious, a certain Saint directs them, ' To season their Discourse with doubt; which is contrary to that peremptory dogmatical Way of Talking; for he believed it favoured very little of Humility or Charity to presume one's self to have so clear a Knowledge of Truth, as not to leave any Room to doubt of it.

## LVI.

They that talk after this Manner, shew, that not only they themselves doubt not of what they say, but also that they will not suffer others to do so: This is to take too much upon our selves, and impose too much on others. Every one would have Leave to be Judge of his own Opinions, and not have them forced upon him, without his own Approbation; and the Mind naturally swells against those who would take from it the Liberty of examining,



aming, which it cannot forbear to do, wherever it finds Reason to doubt. This positive Way serves only to set Men the more eagerly upon Enquiry. They naturally long to be at those bold Talkers, would willingly find Flaws in their Discourses, and shew the World, that those Men of Infallibility, in those Points where they are so confident, are egregiously mistaken.

## LVII.

To shew Passion in our Discourse, is another Fault, different from the former, which may all be committed sedately. This represents the Speaker as one, who imbraces his Opinions, by the Persuasion rather of his Passions than Reason, which for the most Part produces quite contrary Motions in the Hearer, and is to him a strong Presumption of the Falshood of those Opinions. This Eagerness makes Men stand off, and they presently suspect that it was rather Heat than Light that led this warm Talker into his Opinion. They therefore put themselves in a Posture of Opposition against that insufferable Violence,

which endeavours to get Admittance into the Mind by Force and Compulsion, rather than by the soft and gentle Methods of Persuasion. And if they chance to be of a contrary Judgment, they take all those Marks of Passion for Injuries, and return the Argument with as much Heat as it is proposed.

## LVIII.

Contempt and all Manner of insulting, are so visibly offensive in Disputes, that they need not be mentioned; only it may not be amiss to observe, that there happen sometimes Indecencies and Roughness in Debates, which look like slighting, though indeed they come from another Principle. 'Tis enough in Conscience to convince those we discourse with, that they are mistaken, and in the wrong, without adding any Marks of undervaluing, or dashing it rudely in their Teeth, that they have not the least Appearance of Reason on their Side. And for a Man to quit his Opinion, 'tis of it self harsh enough to our Nature, without laying other Difficulties in his way, by the Terms and Manner  
wherein

wherein we endeavour to bring him over to ours ; this Course is never to be taken, but when Disputes are managed in Writing, wherein it may be more our Business to convince the Readers than our Adversary, of his Weakness and Want of Understanding.

## LIX.

To conclude. Driness in Discourse, which consists not in downright rude Terms, but want of smoothing the things we deliver with soft Words, that may make them slide gently into the Mind, is a Fault that offends those whom we treat after this Manner ; for this carries with it a kind of slighting and Indifferency, leaving the Wound, made by Contradiction, without any Lenitive to abate the Smart of it. It shews we have very little Regard to those whom we thus unconcernedly put in Pain, without sharing it with them, and endeavouring to allay it. This is properly the Fault of Driness, which speaks harsh things in harsh Words, without studying the least

least Alleviation. Those whom we love and esteem, we handle gently ; and where we fail to do so, we shew we have very little Respect or Kindness for them.

## LX.

Though every one who reproves or contradicts another, ought carefully to avoid these Miscarriages, yet the Obligation lies not equally on all ; some of these Mistakes being much more visible and provoking in some than in others. The Ascendant is a much less Fault in Grey Hairs, a Superior, or a Person of Quality, than in a young Man, an Inferior, or one of mean Condition ; and so of the rest beforementioned, which are all much less offensive in Persons of Quality or Authority ; for to them they pass for part of that Confidence which their Condition allows them ; but in ordinary People, in whom one expects an humble and submissive Carriage, they are exceedingly displeasing and insupportable.

## LXI.

Scholars, by Virtue of their Learning, assume to themselves a Power of talking magesterially of all things, wherein they take wrong Measures; for Men grant that Privilege, not to real Knowledge, but those they allow to be learned; where we are not thought to be so, 'tis all one as if we were not; wherefore we cannot from hence take a Liberty to be dogmatical; since we ought to govern our selves therein by the Proportion we bear to those with whom we discourse, which depends on their particular Opinion and Esteem of us, and not what really we are in our selves.

## LXII.

He therefore that will be positive, must be sure to have a good Stock of Credit as well as Knowledge. If he want either of these, his Confidence will serve only to expose him. Hence one may draw a very odd, but true Consequence, that little Men, and those who have any outward personal  
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Defects, how knowing soever they are, have need to carry themselves humbly, and without the least Shew of Authority in their Discourses. The Reason whereof is, that their Abilities, unless very extraordinary, will scarce be able to procure them Respect in the Minds of others, Men commonly looking on them with some kind of Contempt, receiving constant and lively Impressions from the Imperfections of their Bodies, whilst the Beauty of their Minds be concealed and out of Sight.

## LXIII.

Hence we may collect, that the principal Means to keep fair with others, are contained in these two short Words, Silence and Humility, *i. e.* we are not to hazard the offending of others, by declaring our Opinions, where the Advantage we propose will not well justify such a Venture: And when we are obliged to speak freely, it ought to be in a way so modest and so humble, as may take off that Roughness which the very Contradiction carries with it.

## LXIV.

## LXIV.

But the Cure will never be thoroughly wrought, if we apply our Care only to the Outside, and do not endeavour a Reformation within. They are our Thoughts that regulate our Words, and as the wise Man says, *a wise Heart shall instruct his Mouth*; we must then labour to get that wise Heart, by bewailing before God those irregular Motions we feel in our selves, and earnestly begging of him the Grace to suppress them, and not resting till we have got our selves into that Temper of Mind, from which this Moderation naturally flows, and which will, without Difficulty, produce it, when it hath once taken Root there.

## LXV.

To this Purpose we shall do well to bear in our Minds a lively Sense of those Dangers, to which our Indiscretion in provoking others is apt to expose us; for the Wounds of the Mind agree in this with those of the Body, that though they are not in themselves all mortal, yet by chafing,  
or

or invenoming, they may be all made so. The least Scratch may draw on a Gangrene, by the Afflux of malignant Humours; and a Provocation given by an impertinent Dispute, may occasion the spiritual Death of both Parties, and give Rise to an inveterate Feud, which in time may eat out all Remains of Charity, both in the one and the other. The first indiscreet Word disposes a Man to interpret amiss those that follow, though innocent, and such as would have been taken without Offence, were there not a Core lying at Heart, and a Mind already exasperated. From thenceforward he treats us with less Respect, and we thereby incensed, put more Heat and Roughness into our Language. Thus the Breach widens, Coldness grows up into perfect Hatred, and Charity is turned out of Doors.

## LXVI.

These are things not only possible, but common; for these Enmities and Hatreds that murder our Souls, are seldom other than the Product and Consequence of some little Disgust, which

which begun in some Indiscretion: I wonder not therefore that the wise Man should so earnestly beg of God, to *set a Seal on his Mouth, that his Tongue might not destroy him*; and I easily conceive, that in this Prayer he expressed his Desire, that no Word might scape his Mouth but by the Allowance of God, as nothing is to be taken out of a Place sealed up, without the Leave of him that sealed it, *i. e.* he pray'd for the utmost degree of Care and Watchfulness over his own Words, that no one might at any Time slip from him, that was not exactly conformable to the Law of God, and therein to the Law of Charity; for he, whose Caution extends no further than to avoid in his Language manifest and gross Irregularities, will undoubtedly let several things come from him that will produce ill Effects.

## LXVII.

The Condition of Man in this Life is very admirable: He is not only marching forwards continually towards an Eternity of Happiness or Misery; but each Step, each particular

lar Word or Action may be the Occasion of turning him towards the one or the other: And the Chain of his Election or Reprobation may be fasten'd to those Passages of his Life which he thinks of no Consequence; we stand all on the Brink of a Precipice, where the least Jog is enough to tumble us in. An indiscrete Word unhinges the Mind, and then our own Weight sinks it into the Abyss.

## LXVIII.

To this Fear, I have been speaking of, we ought to add Respect, a most effectual Means to keep us from offending others. Servants find it no Difficulty to forbear contradicting their Master, nor Courtiers to avoid provoking their Prince; because the internal Homage and Respect they pay them in their Minds, easily suppresses all Risings of Heart, and insensibly keeps their Tongues in order. Thus also should we carry our selves towards all Christians, if, following the Apostles Rule, we looked on them as our Superiors and Masters; we cannot decline doing so, if we consider Christ



in them, and call to mind that he hath set them in his Place: And if, instead of prying into their Faults, we would but take Notice of the Reasons we have to give them the upper Hand.

## LXIX.

But the main thing to be endeavour'd is, not to be uneasie under this Restraint, nor to think it a hard Case, that we are oblig'd either to Silence, or Moderation and Humility in our Discourse; but rather to look on it as a thing happy, useful, and advantageous to us; since it is a principal Means to keep us lowly in Mind, the great Happiness of a Christian, as on the contrary side, Pride is his great Misery. This ought to endear to us our Want of Authority, natural Defects, or whatever else may dispose us that Way. 'Tis true, those that are not in Credit nor Authority, are forced to talk with more Submission, how learned or able soever they are; but it is true also, that they ought to esteem themselves the happier for it.

## LXX.

## LXX.

'Tis a dangerous thing to be in Credit with others, to have an Influence upon their Minds, and to be able to give them what Impressions one pleases; for this tempts us to communicate the Mistakes we are possess'd with, and the rash Opinions we have taken up of others; whereas those, who are not in such Esteem, stand clear of that Danger; the Errors they have, they have to themselves, and infect not others: they find themselves not set high in the Opinions of those about them, the Place that naturally gives Rise and Growth to our Vanity. And perceiving that Men do but little regard them, they, on their Side, disengage themselves from Respect of Men, and are thereby the better at Liberty to eye God alone in all their Actions.

## LXXI.

Not that we ought to make it our Business to bring our selves low in Esteem and Reputation with others,  
nor

nor that the Loss of Credit, drawn on us, by any Miscarriage of our own, is not just Matter of Humiliation; but however it comes about, if we have not Reason to love the Cause, we ought yet to acknowledge the Effect as favourable to us, by excusing us from having an Hand in a Thousand ticklish Affairs, and keeping us within the strictest Bounds of Moderation in our Discourse. 'Tis true, we thereby lose the Opportunity and Advantage of edifying others; but since God hath given us a more particular Charge of our own, than another's Salvation; methinks this is a Condition we ought rather to desire, than be troubled at. And whoever find themselves in this Estate, however they came into it, have Reason to address themselves to God, with Comfort and Confidence, in the Words of the Psalmist, *It is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I might learn thy Righteousness.*

## LXXII.

The Advice I have given, not to offend others by opposing their Opinions, will serve, in a good Measure,  
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to direct us how to carry our selves in respect of their Passions, Men taking not amiss our Dislike of their Opinions for any other Reason, but because they themselves are in Love with them, and by their Passions devoted to them. The Displeasure they feel, when we oppose their Desires, has also the same Rise with that which makes them uneasy, when we dispute their Tenets. They would fain all be Tyrants, be absolute over other Men, who must all submit and give way to their Inclinations; but because this natural Ambition is too unreasonable, too ill-favoured to appear barefaced, Men have been taught, by Self-Love, to veil their Passions under the Name of Justice; and to pretend that 'tis the Interest of Truth and Reason that makes them so concerned when they meet with Opposition.

## LXXIII.

Though this Practice cannot be justified, 'tis not yet convenient to put Men upon it by our imprudent clashing with them; for it may happen, that as he who takes it amiss, that another

ther follows not his Inclination, is to blame ; he also that refuses to follow them, may be much more so, as having failed of his Duty, where Reason required it ; and thereby becoming guilty of those Faults, which the other's, Peevishness and Resentment hath run him into ; we must therefore, as we ought, comply with the Humours of others ; Otherwise we shall unavoidably draw on us Complaints, Murmurs and Quarrels, altogether inconsistent with Charity and Peace of Mind, and consequently with a Life truly Christian.

## LXXIV.

But by the way, let us take this along with us, that we are not here learning the Art how to please Men ; but only how not to displease them, or draw on us their Aversion, which is sufficient to preserve that Peace we are discoursing of. 'Tis true, the surest way is to get into their Affections ; but that has other Inconveniencies. To keep Peace then there is nothing more required but only not to incur Mens Hatred, nor to raise in them  
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Storms and Complaints against us, which cannot be well done without acquainting our selves with their Inclinations, and complying with them as far as in Justice we may.

## LXXV.

These Inclinations are some good, some bad, and some indifferent; we ought never to satisfy the bad, tho' it be not necessary always to oppose them: 'Tis matter of Provocation to set our selves, without particular Reason, in Opposition to another's Passion, how unreasonable soever; one ought to weigh well the Good and Evil, and consider whether we have Ground to expect Good from this Opposition, sufficient to over-balance the Evil which may follow from the ill Humour it may put him into; for one may apply to all sorts of People St. *Augustin's* Rule of reprovng the great Men of the World, if there be Reason to fear that our Reprehension should provoke them to do some greater Harm than the Good we design them can countervail; 'tis then the Advice of Charity, and no corrupt Pretence, to hold  
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our Peace, and not to reprove them at all ; we must not think that a little Stock of Virtue will serve the Turn, and be sufficient to inable us patiently to bear with the Faults which we have no Hopes to remedy ; or that the Freedom of a Man, who is bold and open in his Reproof, is a Quality either more difficult, or seldomer to be met with, than the Moderation of one who bewails the Miscarriages of others before God in secret, who constrains himself to seem to take no Notice of them, and takes Occasion from them not to condemn the Persons, but to humble himself under the Consideration of the common Rate and Bulk of Mankind. This carries in it the Practice of several Virtues together, of Mortification, in suppressing the Rising of our Hearts against their Persons ; of Humiliation, in observing our own Blindness ; and of Charity, in bearing with our Neighbour.

## LXXVI.

One great Misery of Men is, that they practise their Virtues by the Advice of their Passions, which min-

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gle themselves with their best Performances. Hence they reprove what they should pass by, and pass by what they should reprove. They busie themselves abroad about others, when their Duty lies at home with themselves: And again, they are troubled and taken up wholly with themselves, when God requires them to imploy themselves about others. In the Practice of Virtue, if they may not do just what they have a Mind to, they will be sullen, and do nothing at all; not considering that the Inability God hath put them under, in Respect of some Actions, gives them an Opportunity of performing others, by so much the more acceptable to him as they are not the Effects of their own Inclinations.

## LXXVII.

Farther yet, 'tis a Fault in us to take upon us to oppose any one's Passions, how unjust soever, when there are others who may do it with more Success than we; it being plain that this Forwardness is nothing but the Effect of ill Nature, which is pleased  
with

with doing a cross thing; for Malice vents it self in just as well as unjust rebukes; and is very glad of any fair Pretence to vex another; those Reprehensions carrying most Humiliation and Smart with them, which seem most to have Reason on their Side.

## LXXVIII.

Upon the same Ground it is we are to make Use of the softest and gentlest ways, the least offensive, and least provoking, when we are forced to do any thing which is ungrateful to our Neighbour. And 'tis not enough to keep us blameless, that we have Reason at the Bottom, unless we have great Care also of the Manner of our Actions, and endeavour to satisfy, in Word and Deed, by all manner of Arguments, those whom we reprove, and to convince them fully, that 'tis not by Choice nor Design, but by an indispensable Necessity, that we find our selves obliged not to comply with their Inclinations.

## LXXIX.

I have mentioned before Inclinations indifferent ; whereby I mean those which have for their Object lawful things, and such as may be recommended to us by Reason it self, without the Help of our Passions, and yet we, by too much Eagerness, too much Concern, may be faulty in the Pursuit of them. Now in these indifferent things there is a greater Latitude, and we may yeild to the Inclinations of others.

1. Because we are not their Judges, and had need of very clear Evidence, before we conclude them guilty of having set their Hearts too much on these indifferent things.

2. We know not how far this Concern may be necessary to them ; for there are some who would fall into a more dangerous Condition, if they should of a sudden be taken off from those things, on which they have set their Affections.

3. Because these Inclinations are to be cured with Skill and Discretion ; and 'tis not for us to take upon us to be



be Judges in what Manner it ought to be done.

4. We have Reason to apprehend that we may do them more Harm by our indiscrete Opposition to those, as they call them, innocent Passions, than we shall do them Good by our meddling.

## LXXX.

It may therefore be great Indiscretion to condemn Excess in Apparel, before those who are in Love with fine Cloaths ; to enlarge upon the Usefulness of Painting, in the Presence of such as delight in Pictures ; or to speak against Verses and Poetry, to those whose Genius lies that way ; such Discourses are a sort of Medicines, and like Medicines have an ill Taste, and may have ill Success ; and therefore ought to be given with the same Caution and Wariness that Physicians prescribe their Remedies : And 'tis to play the unskilful Empirick, to be tampering with them on all Persons indifferently.

## LXXXI.

'Tis Reason enough to make us comply with the Inclinations of others, even when we suspect they give themselves up too much to them, that we do not clearly foresee we shall be able to do them any Good. We had need be well assured before we attempt that way of Cure. But to make us give way to their Desires, in things lawful in themselves, 'tis sufficient that we are uncertain and in the dark; for then we are at Liberty to govern our selves by the common Rule of Charity, which requires us to serve and oblige our Neighbours. And the Benefit of shewing our own, and gaining their Affection, being the Consequence of such a Carriage, we ought not to hazard the Loss of that but for some other more manifest and more considerable Advantage.

## LXXXII.

I call those lawful Passions which we are obliged to comply with, though perhaps it be not just in others,

thers, to require this of us imperiously; but since we are more concerned to do our Duties, than reform their Faults, we are bound, with Singleness of Heart, to acquit our selves in all that we owe them, not leaving them any Occasion of Complaint, without considering whether they take not too much upon them in their demanding of it.

## LXXXIII.

To understand fully the Extent of our Duty, we must consider that there are some things we owe Men, by the Law of Justice, which is that we call properly Law: And other things we owe them, by the Law of Decency, which is founded on the common Consent of Men, who have agreed to condemn those who offend against it. 'Tis thus that we are obliged to pay those, with whom we converse, certain Civilities, established amongst well-bred People, which the Laws of the Country take no Notice of. Thus there are set out several Duties to several Relations. We owe Correspondence, Confidence, Frankness and

Friendship, proportionably as we meet with them in others. These Measures Men have agreed on to regulate and maintain civil Conversation, which vary with the Circumstances; so that in one Degree of Familiarity we owe that to one, which another cannot take amiss, if we refuse him.

## LXXXIV.

It behoves us to be punctual in the Practice of these Duties, the Neglect whereof is sure to draw on us the Complaints, Dislike, and Aversion of the World; it is not to be believed how much a little Failing in Civility, Gratitude, or Application, offends the Weak and Imperfect; and how apt it is to extinguish quite those few Sparks of Charity that are to be found in them. These are things that sit uneasie on their Minds, and keeping them in a continual Fret, hinder them from making any Benefit of those Virtues they may observe in us. These Miscarriages of curs, which displease and vex them, making much more sensible Impressions than those Virtues in us which concern them not.

## LXXXV.

## LXXXV.

Charity therefore obliging us to bear with that Frailty of humane Nature, and to remove from our Brethren the Occasions of Temptation, commands us to be very careful in the Performance of these Duties; nor is it an Obligation of Charity alone, Justice too, and the eternal Law of Nature, requires it of us, as is easie to be shewn, both in Reference to Returns of Gratitude and Acts of Civility: to which may be reduced those others whereof we have already spoken, *viz.* Confidence, Openness, and Application, which are Branches of it. The Duty of Gratitude, and the Acknowledgments we owe to Men, is founded in this, that whereas God makes Use of Men, to convey to us his Blessings, both of Body and Soul; It is his Pleasure that we receive, with open Arms, these Instruments of his Goodness, and that our Gratitude ascend back to him by the same way: And as he conceals himself in those Favours, whereof he makes Men the immediate and visible Causes; so it is his Will



that our visible Acknowledgments should terminate in them, and by them our Returns be made to him, the invisible Author of all our Good; 'tis therefore a Transgression against the Appointment of Almighty God, to satisfy our selves with thanking him inwardly in our Minds, without any outward Expressions of Gratitude to those whom he hath put in his Place, and made his Receivers in this World.

## LXXXVI.

Men, out of Interest, have an Eye on those, who owe them Thanks; and God, the Sovereign Inspector of our Actions, has so too. This is that which the wise Man tells us in these Words, *God regards him that returns Thanks.* Let then this double watch on us, keep us awake, with our Eyes open and fixed on Men, who expect Acknowledgments from us; and on God, who hath appointed us to pay them.

## LXXXVII.

## LXXXVII.

'Twill not be well to neglect this Duty, under Pretence that those, to whom we owe it, are devout, religious Persons, and expect it not; for however their Conversation may be in Heaven, they cease not to see what is due to them on Earth. There are few arrived to that Degree of Perfection, as not to be sensible of others Ingratitude; or, not to be at all dissatisfied with others Neglect of them. Besides, that it is ordinary to give it another kind of Turn, and thereby produce the same Effect, which follows from a direct Resentment. I cannot put out my Eyes, says one, nor avoid seeing that such and such do not well; however I, for my Part, do freely excuse them; whom they thus excuse, they also blame; and in blaming them, they love them less, and so are insensibly disposed to shew them less Kindness.

## LXXXVIII.

## LXXXVIII.

'Tis the same in matters of Civility, the Neglects whereof the most unconcerned fail not to turn their Eyes on, and take Notice of, and the more imperfect lay them to heart. The Mind hardly keeps up a lively Persuasion, if any at all, that others love or esteem us ; when the Senses meet with no Marks of it, 'tis Civility which, by the Senses, sends in effectual Convictions, and possesses the Heart with such Thoughts, which cannot long subsist without such Nourishment ; but quickly decay and end in a dead Coldness, when they fail of a Supply of fresh Instances from without.

## LXXXIX.

Every one looks on Civility as his due ; and 'tis true, every one has a Right to it, according to the Measure Men have established, though few reach the Bottom of it ; for no Man has in himself a Title to exact of another any uneasy or troublesome Performance.

formance. Here, as in Gratitude, we must look higher to find the Original, and Rise of it ; and if what a certain godly Man said be true, ' That there ' is nothing so civil as a good Christian, we ought to seek in Religion for those Grounds, on which Civility and our Obligation to practise it, are founded ; some whereof perhaps we may meet with in these Considerations following.

## XC.

The Necessities and Wants of Life drive Men into Societies, and keep them there together, and plainly evince, that Societies are according to the Will of God ; since to that End, he hath left us under those Necessities ; whatsoever then serves to the Preservation of Society, comes within that Appointment ; and that Law of Nature, which obliges each part to contribute to the Preservation of the whole, is to be looked on as a divine Sanction ; Love and Respect are the Bonds of Society, and necessary to its Preservation ; for Contempt and Hatred

tred are the things that set Men at Distance: There are a Thousand little Conveniencies of Life, which are not the Commodities of Trade, are never bought nor sold, but are always given; they are the particular Traffick of Kindness, and Love alone can purchase them. Besides, Communities are made up of particular Persons, who are all full of Love and Esteem of themselves: and if others endeavour not a little to satisfy and sooth these Inclinations, Society will prove but Herds of Malecontents, and hardly hold together; there is need therefore of mutual Kindness and Respect, which, being of themselves invisible, Men have, by Consent, established certain Duties to pass as the Marks and Pledges of them. From whence it follows, that to be wanting in those Duties, is to own a Disposition of Mind averse to Esteem or Affection. These external Actions then being settled Signs of good Will and Respect, as their contraries are of contrary Affections; We ought to pay these outward Performances, wherever the internal Dispositions, they



they stand for, are due; we injure those whom we treat otherwise, and discover, by Omissions of this kind, a disobliging Temper of Mind, and wayward Thoughts, which we ought not to have towards them.

XCI.

We have then sufficient and just Ground to be very punctual in all manner of Civility towards others.

1. To avoid being thought to contemn or slight those whom we treat otherwise, a Suspicion which naturally attends all Neglects of that kind.

2. To keep up humane Society, to the Preservation whereof each one ought to contribute his Part; since every one derives from it great Advantages.

3. To avoid the tacit or open Complaints and Reproaches of those to whom we have been guilty of such Omissions, which are the Sources of those Divisions that disquiet our Lives, and disturb that Christian Peace which is the Subject we have in hand, it is difficult,

ficult, otherwise than by great Care and Watchfulness in these Duties, to keep: Others, from breaking with us, and our selves from becoming the Objects of their Aversion and Hatred.

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## PART II.

### I.

**T**IS not enough, for the Preservation of Peace, to avoid giving Offence to others; but we must also avoid taking Offence our selves, when they fail on their Side in any thing towards us; for it is impossible there should be a good Understanding and Quiet at Heart, where we are so touchy as to take Exceptions at every little Word or Action that does not just hit our Humour, or suit with our Opinion: And 'tis hard so to stifle the Displeasure, we have once conceived in our Minds, as not to let it break out in our Actions. It will be very apt to make us ready, too ready to return the Provocation, and to take  
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Occasion to be quit with those who have offended us. Thus the Grudge improves it self into an open Breach, and things often come to Extremities.

## II.

We must therefore endeavour to stop Divisions in their first Rise, and stifle all Quarrels in their Birth. Self-love never fails to suggest to us, that the proper Remedy in this Case is, to correct others, to blame them for using us ill, and force them to better Terms. This makes us so ready to complain of the Proceedings of others, and so forward to lay open their Miscarriages; flattering our selves with this Conceit, that our Complaints are of great Use, serving either to bring those to Reason, who take Warning, and mend what we dislike in them; or else to punish them by the Vexation they create, and the Censure which, from all Hands, they draw on those who mend not.

## III.

## III.

But we, if whilst we pretend to make others reasonable, were but so our selves, we should easily see, that the Course we take to establish Peace, by reforming others, is extremely ridiculous, as being impossible to be successful. Let us complain of others as much as we please, it seldom does any thing but anger and exasperate them the more, without contributing the least to their Amendment; we shall thereby only gain the Reputation of being captious, nice and proud; and what is worse, we shall not be much wrong'd in that Opinion; since it is certain, that those Complaints proceed not but from Touchiness and Pride. Those themselves that give Ear to our Complaints, allow our Reasons, and believe we have been ill used, will not yet be over satisfied with our so great Tendernefs and Sensibility. And Men being naturally inclined to justify themselves, if those we complain of, have but never so little Dexterity, they will represent the Matter so, that we our selves shall be thought  
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in the Wrong. The same Want of Justice and Equity, which made them commit the Fault we complain of, will keep them from acknowledging it, and every thing shall pass with them for true and right, which may serve to justify them to others.

## IV.

But if those we complain of are in Degree, Authority, or Credit, Persons above us, the Complaints we make of them will be yet more useless and more dangerous. All the Advantage we can propose to our selves in complaining is, to give our ill Nature the idle, transient Satisfaction of making them be blamed by those to whom we tell our Story; but by this Means a Breach being made, and they set against us, the ill Consequences we draw on our selves prove often very considerable and very lasting.

## V.

Prudence then requires us to take a quite contrary Course, and quit the Thoughts of correcting others. The  
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right way is, to endeavour to secure our Peace, by reforming our selves, and to establish our Quiet upon the Government of our own Passions. The Minds and Tongues of others are neither of them at our Dispose, nor are we accountable for any of their Actions, farther than as we have been the Occasions of them. They are our own Thoughts, Words and Deeds, that we are to answer for; our proper Business is, to look after our selves, to bestow our Pains at Home, and mend our own Faults: If we do this as we ought, nothing from abroad will be able to trouble us.

## VI.

In the Affairs of the World, we never make any such Mistake: There we always reason right, and fail not constantly to prefer a certain Good of our own, before an uncertain Good of another. If we did the like in the Concernments of our Salvation, we should quickly acknowledge, that to complain was the wrong Way, and such as Reason condemned; for by not complaining, we certainly benefit our

our selves; and by complaining, 'tis very uncertain whether we shall do any Good to others. Why do we then lose the Benefit of our own Patience, under pretence of procuring others the Benefit of our Correction? There ought at least to be a very great Probability of our succeeding in it; to attempt it on any other Terms, and upon weak Hopes to forego the certain Good of an humble Quiet, Suffering is directly contrary to all Sense and Reason.

## VII.

As to Silence, one may in general take this for a Rule: That there ought to be a Reason to make one speak, but to hold one's Peace there needs nothing at all, *i. e.* it is a sufficient Cause of Silence not to have any Inducement or Obligation to talk. This Maxim may yet more justly be applied to that Silence which keeps in our Complaints; we had need of Reasons very clear, and very cogent, to make us complain; but to keep us from it, 'tis enough that we are not under an absolute Necessity to do so.

## VIII.

## VIII.

What Debts do we forgive our Brother, if we, by our Complaints, require of him all that he is capable to owe us? And if, for the least Trespas he commits against us, we take all the Revenge we can, by exposing him to the Censure of others? How can we, with any Confidence, ask Pardon of God for our Offences against him, if we forgive not any one Fault, which we can but think others commit against us?

## IX.

There can be nothing more advantageous than to suppress our Complaints, and keep in our Resentments: 'Tis the properest Means to prevail with God to abate the Rigor of his Justice, and, as the Scripture says, *not to enter into Judgment with us*. 'Tis the readiest way to stifle Differences in their Birth, which will give us no further Trouble, being thus still-born. 'Tis Charity to our selves; for by this Means we enjoy the Blessing of Patience,

ence, avoid the Character of being touchy and captious, and scape the Trouble which we shall certainly feel when the Injustice and Artifice of others shall turn the Guilt on us, and we shall be openly condemned for doing wrong, where we had Thought we had Right on our Side. 'Tis Charity also to others, in bearing with their Weakness, in sparing them the little Confusion which perhaps they have deserved, and keeping them from those Faults which they may be apt to run into, in justifying themselves, and falling afresh on those whom they have already given Reason to complain of them. And to conclude, 'tis commonly the probablest Means to gain them; the silent Proofs of our Patience being much more likely to quiet their Minds, and soften their Hearts, into Kindness towards us, than the Noise and Vexation of our Complaints; for the best we can hope from our complaining is, only that it should make them change their outward Carriage, whilst their inward Aversion, the Source of all that we complain of, remains still, and is thereby increased.



## X.

The fittest Time to gain upon our selves this firm Resolution is, when we have happened to break out into Complaints; for we can never have a better Opportunity to convince our selves how vain and insignificant the Satisfaction is we sought for that way: We may then seasonably say to our selves, is it then for this Moment, this nothing of Pleasure, that we have thrown away the inestimable Treasure of Patience, and our Hopes of a Reward in Heaven? What Good have our Complaints done us? we have endeavoured to expose others to the Censures of the World, which possibly we have drawn wholly on our selves; at least, it is very certain, that the righteous Judge of all Men hath seen and condemned in us Malice, Impatience, and Disesteem of the Happiness of the other World. Whilst we were silent, we had the Advantage over those, of whom we complain; but by our Complaints, we have lower'd our selves beneath them, having Reason to think that our Offence herein against

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Almighty God, is greater than all those which Men can commit against us; so that we have done our selves much more harm than we can receive from all the little Injuries of Men. All the Hurt they can do us, reaches but to some few inconsiderable things of this Life; whereas the Mischief we do our selves, by the Peevishness of our Complaints, may extend to the Loss of eternal Happiness, which depends upon every good Action; we have therefore infinitely much more Reason to fall upon our selves, rather than others, and to turn our Complaints wholly that way.

## XI.

Suppose we make a Resolution never to complain more, what shall we lose by it? Just nothing at all; no, not in this World, when we can do so; whatever has passed, it will be no more talked of to our Disadvantage. Our Moderation being once taken notice of, will allay the ill Humour, unedge the sharp Tongues of others, and gain upon their Affections; and the worst that can remain, will be only perhaps  
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some little Incivilities, some undeserved Tattle, which our Complaints will not be able to remedy. That ill-natured Satisfaction we take in communicating to others our Grudges by way of Complaint, can it make us amends for the Loss of that Treasure of Peace, and Tranquillity, and other Advantages, which Humility and Patience would yeild us, if practised in such Occasions?

## XII.

These Considerations then are proper to stop our Forwardness to complain, and to teach us how to govern our Tongues; but yet it is impossible we should keep this Temper and Moderation in our outward Actions, if we give way to our Resentments, and let them get footing within. The Complaints of the Mouth come from those of the Heart; and 'tis hard to keep them in when the Mind is fill'd top full with them. They are always struggling to get out, and never fail to find some Crany or other. Besides, the principal End of outward Temper, being to procure us internal

Peace and Quiet of Mind, it will be but of little Advantage to carry a smooth and calm Outside, when we are all Tempest and Uproar within; we must endeavour therefore to silence those secret Complaints, which the Mind makes to it self, as well as those it speaks out to others: The way to do this is, to take our Affections off from those things which give Rise to them; for we never make any Complaints in matters that are perfectly indifferent to us.

## XIII.

The Occasions of Complaint are infinite, since they comprehend all the Objects of our Love, and all things wherein we can receive either Damage or Offence from others; but yet they may be reduced to certain general Heads, *viz.* Contempt, unjust Censures, Railing, Aversion, Incivility, Neglect, Reserve, Distrust, Ingratitude, and ill Humour; we naturally hate all these, because we love their contraries, *viz.* Esteem, Affection, Civility, Application, Openness, Confidence, Gratitude, and good Humour.

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The way therefore to fortifie our selves against those Impressions, which the Qualities we dislike may make upon us, is, to take off our Affections from their Opposites, which we are so much inclined to love. Nothing but the Grace of God can do this; but since Grace works upon us as Men, and makes use of Means, it may not be amiss to furnish our Minds with Considerations that may shew us the Vanity of those beloved Objects, we so much set our Hearts upon; which is the Design of the following Reflections.

## XIV.

There is nothing discovers how much Man is given up to Error, Vanity, and Injustice, more than the great Satisfaction and Delight that touches him sensibly at Heart, when he finds others have a good Opinion of him; for on the one side, how blind soever we are, we want not Light to perceive, that this Passion is vain, ridiculous, and unreasonable; and yet on the other side, how vain, how ridiculous soever it is, and how much soever



we are convinced of it, we are unable to master it ; we feel it still warm at the Bottom of our Hearts, it keeps Possession there, and we know not how to dislodge it ; nevertheless it is not amiss to consult often with Reason, and hear what that says in the Case, which, though it should not work a perfect Cure, and wholly pull up by the Roots this untoward Inclination, yet it may, by making us ashamed and out of Countenance, keep it under, and lessen the Effects of it.

## XV.

There are but few who are so grossly vain, as to be delighted with Commendations notoriously false ; and a little Sense is sufficient to keep us from being pleased that others wholly mistake our Character. 'Tis a Folly, for Example, that few People can be guilty of, to desire to be thought learned in a Tongue whereof they know not a Word : Or, to affect to pass for Masters in the Mathematicks, not having the least Skill at all in that Science. 'Twould be hard certainly to be guilty of so sottish a Vanity, with-

without Shame and Confusion for it within. And yet we shall find that we all of us come little short of the same degree of Vanity and Hypocrisie, if we consider how little Title we generally have to that Esteem, upon which we value our selves, and which, with Satisfaction, we receive from others.

## XVI.

To paint it out a little to you; What would one say of a Man, who, being horribly scabby and full of Ulcers, from Head to Foot, or covered all over with Leprosie, except some few Patches of his Face or Hands, which, however fair outwardly, he was yet in doubt whether it were any farther than Skin deep, and whether even these too were not all Infection and Rottenness underneath, should, hiding the rest, expose these Parts to View, and delight himself in the Commendations of their Beauty? Would not this Excess of Vanity be thought to partake of Madness? And yet this is but an imperfect Draught of our Vanity, and represents not all

its Deformity ; we are full of Sins and Transgressions, and Corruption overspreads the whole Man. The Good that is in us is very inconsiderable, and that little that is, Self-love, by too much reflecting on it, and overvaluing of it, makes a Shift commonly to spoil ; yet nevertheless if it happen, that Men, overlooking our Faults, cast their Eyes with Esteem on that little Good appears in us, which perhaps is nothing but Shew, and, at Bottom, perfect Corruption ; this Opinion, how false and ill-grounded soever, fails not yet to swell us with Pride and Satisfaction.

## XVII.

I say, this Representation of our Vanity comes short of the Truth, and sets it not out in its full Deformity ; for he that having the rest of his Body stuck full of Ulcers and putrid Sores, should please himself, that one of his Fingers was commended and taken notice of for being handsome, would certainly be ridiculously vain ; yet however, he would not be perfectly blind nor ignorant of his Condition ;  
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but our Vanity is much more absurd and extravagant, being accompanied with Blindness and Ignorance. In hiding our Faults from others, we endeavour to put them out of our own Sight, and in that we are pretty successful; when others look on us, we would have them direct their Eyes only on that Part which is clear from Scabs and Ulcers, and we our selves take Care to view our selves only on that Side, and to see nothing else.

## XVIII.

What then is this Esteem that so elevates us? 'Tis nothing but an Opinion, raised upon the Consideration of some small Part of our selves, and an Ignorance of all the rest: And the Satisfaction we take therein, what is it but a Survey of our selves taken blindfold, full of Oversights and Mistakes, wherein we make an Estimate of our selves, only by some one Particular; and fixing our Eyes on some small untainted Spot, overlook all those Botches and Sores that cover us every where else?

## XIX.

And, I beseech you, what is there so desirable, so worthy our Concern in the good Opinion of others ; let us ask our selves what it is we are so taken with, or rather, let us consult our own Experience, that will inform us concerning Esteem, that there is nothing in the World more vain, nothing more fickle ; Men blow hot and cold in a Breath, and their Thoughts are more changeable than the Wind. He that magnified us in some particular Occasions, will be as ready to lessen us in another. And Esteem it self is often the Occasion of it, which is apter to procure us ill Will than Affection : And though perhaps it may draw from Men some dry, empty Commendations, yet even these our Admirers will prefer before us any the most despicable Creature that doth but suit better with their Interests. The Commendations they cannot refuse us, they take Care to darken and sully with spiteful Reflections on our Faults : They will commend in us what is least commendable,



dable, that they may condemn what is most so ; and in earnest, now must he not be one of a very low Mind, and exceeding mean Spirit, who can pride himself in a thing so pitiful, so contemptible ?

XX.

But let us suppose this Esteem as well grounded and as sincere as we our selves can fantasie, or our Vanity can wish. Let us heighten it by the Credit and Ability of the Persons that value us, or whatever else may serve to flatter our Inclinations. And after all, what shall we find of amiable or substantial in it ? 'Tis a Consideration that these Persons have for us, upon a Supposition, that there is some worth in us. A bare Consideration, that neither puts any new worth into us, nor increases the old ; but leaving us just as it found us, we are not one jot the better for it. Besides, this Consideration is not in being, but when we are actually in their Thoughts, which is but seldom, possibly they think on us once or twice a Year, and when they do chance to call us to mind,

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'tis but with a transient short Reflection, all the rest of the Time we lie forgotten.

## XXI.

Esteem is a Good so uncertain, so fleeting, that there are a Thousand slight Accidents able to make us lose it, without the least Fault of ours. A false Report, a Mischance, an ill Humour puts an End to it, or turns it to our Disadvantage ; for when Esteem joins it self to Aversion, it serves only to open the Eyes, to spy out the Faults, and the Heart to receive favourably whatever may disparage those whom one hates and esteems together ; for then we hate even the Esteem it self, it sits uneasie upon us, and we would gladly get rid of it.

## XXII.

If we see not those Thoughts of Esteem, that are in the Breasts of others, 'tis the same to us as if they were not ; and if we do, the Sight indangers that little Virtue we have : What a Purchase then have we in that,  
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which does us no Good when we see it not, and Harm when we do ; and is at once both vain and uselefs, uncertain and dangerous ?

## XXIII.

If we did not set our Hearts on the Esteem and Commendations of Men, we should be but little troubled when they talk'd against us ; since all that such Discourses could do, would be only to take from us a thing that we valued not ; but since there are of those who think, that though they ought not to covet Esteem, yet they have Reason to take it amiss, when they find themselves contemned or disparaged, we may do well to examine these things that are so offensive to us, and consider what there is of real in them.

## XXIV.

To convince us how much our own Tendernefs is blameable in this Case, and that all the Disquiet it raises in our Minds is contrary to Reason, and not so much the Effect of those Objects  
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themselves, as the Products of our own corrupt Hearts, we are but to consider that these Censures, these Discourses, which so mortally provoke us, are of Three sorts: They are either wholly true, or wholly false, or partly true, partly false; but in neither of these Cases is it just for us to be offended, if the disadvantageous Censures of others be true; is it not a monstrous thing not to be troubled that our Miscarriages are known to God, and to be out of all Patience that they should come to the Knowledge of Men? Or can there be a clearer Instance, that we esteem God less than we do Men? Is it not the highest Injustice to acknowledge that our Sins deserve eternal Punishment, and yet not to submit with Joy to so light an one as is that little Confusion which they draw on us before Men. The Knowledge Men get of our Miseries or Miscarriages increases them not, but may serve to abate them, if we humbly submit to it. Is it not then an inconceivable Folly, to have no Sense of that real Harm we do ourselves, and to be so peevishly sensible of the Censures of others, which can  
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do us nothing but good? This kind of Touchiness, what is it but a Proof of our perfect Blindness? And when we are guilty of it, we ought to reflect on our selves, and consider that we are loaden with a great many other Evils besides these which at present take up our Thoughts, of which Men know but a very little.

XXV.

But if these Censures and Discourses of us are false and ill grounded, the Offence we take at them is not the less unreasonable or unjust; for why should not the Judgment that God passes on us, and wherein he clears us, be sufficient to make us slight the Opinion of Men, who think hardly of us; since the Approbation of Men, whom we esteem, serves commonly well enough to comfort and support us under those disadvantageous Opinions which Persons of less Consideration have entertained of us? And when Reason makes it so plain, that these Discourses cannot hurt us, that they do not of themselves the least Harm to our Souls or Bodies, and that they



they may prove very useful to us, why has it so little Influence upon our Minds, why has it not the Power to fortifie our Hearts against a Passion so vain, so unreasonable?

## XXVI.

We are not a Jot angry when another imagins we have a Fever, which we know we have not; and why then are we vexed at those who charge us with Faults we were never touch'd with, and accuse us of Miscarriages we were never guilty of? Since their Opinion is less able to run us into those Faults, or make us guilty of these Miscarriages, than their thinking we have a Fever can actually make us sick of that Disease.

## XXVII.

'Twill be answered perhaps, that to be sick of a Fever, carries no Discredit with it, nor lessens one a Jot in the Opinion of the World. Hence it comes, that Mens concluding us sick of a Fever, disturbs us not; but they who fix on us any spiritual Distemper,

per, add to that Imputation Disesteem too, and are apt to produce the same Thoughts in others. To say Truth, this is the Bottom of the matter, this is that that troubles us; but withal, it serves only to discover our Injustice; but we, if we would but do our selves Right, must acknowledge that those who lay to our Charge Faults which we have not, pass by a great many that really we have; so that in Effect, by those Censures, how false soever, that we so much complain of, we are perfectly Gainers. And they would be exceedingly more to our Disadvantage if they were wholly conformable to Truth, and they who bestow them on us were throughly acquainted with the Reality of our Condition. If then they use us hardly and with a little Injustice, they make us more than amends by a Thousand ways, wherein they are favourable to us, and we should be very sorry to have them treat us with exact Justice: But we are so unjust, so unreasonable, that we desire to make Advantage of the Ignorance of others; we cannot endure they should take from us any thing that we do, but ~~sanse~~ we have, and  
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we would fain keep up in their Thoughts the Reputation of several good Qualities which really we have not ; we complain that they imagin they discover Defects in us which, in Truth, are not there ; but it goes for nothing with us, that they overlook an infinite Number of Faults, which really we have ; as if Good and Evil consisted wholly in the Opinion of Men.

## XXVIII.

If then we have no Reason to complain of the Censures we lie under, when they are true, nor when they are false neither, it follows, that we can have no Reason to be offended at them when they are partly true, partly false ; and yet we, by the most unjust and partial Division imaginable, are provok'd by the Falshood in them, but never humble our selves for that Part which is true ; and instead of passing by, as we ought, what is false in them, out of Consideration of what is true, we quite contrary foolishly reflecting only on this, that there is a Mixture of some Falshood and Injustice,

justice, stifle all those Thoughts which the true and substantial Part ought to produce in us.

## XXIX.

I do not expect that these Considerations should be able to reform our unjust Proceedings, but perhaps they may suffice to convince us of them, and 'tis something to lie under such a Conviction ; for in all those tacit Complaints we make of others, in all that Censure and Vexation which their Censures of us fills us with, there is a perfect Forgetfulness of our own true Estate. And we mind not those real Miseries we lie under, it being impossible that those who were sensible of their own miserable Condition, and had Thoughts conformable to it, should concern themselves for the Report or Opinion of Men. A Man overlaid with Debts, sinking under Law-Suits, loaden with Poverty, matters not much what others talk of him ; under the Pressure and Weight of his own real Calamities, he has little Consideration for those imaginary Evils. The right way to cure that  
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Tenderness which makes us so sensible of what is said of us, is to fix our Thoughts intently on our own spiritual Evils, our Weakness and Poverty, the Danger that threatens us, and the Judgment God passes on us, which shall determin of our Condition when we come to die : If such Considerations dwelt upon our Spirits as they ought, and kept up there a lively Sense of these our great Concerns, the Thoughts of what People talk of us would not easily get Admittance, or at least not wholly take up our Minds, nor fill them, as they often do, with Indignation and Bitterness.

## XXX.

To this Purpose it is convenient to compare the Thoughts of Men and of God together, and to weigh their Difference. The Opinions of Men are often false, unjust, uncertain, rash, and never fail to be wavering, useless, and of no Effect ; whether they favour or condemn us, they alter us not from what we are, nor really add one jot to our Happiness or Misery ; but 'tis on the Judgment that God passes on us, that depends all our Good or Ill : His  
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Judgment is always righteous, always true, always certain; it is unalterable, and the Consequences of it reach to Eternity. Is it not then the greatest Folly imaginable, so wholly to regard the Judgment of Men, which is of so little Moment, and in the mean time not to mind what God thinks of us, wherein our whole is concerned?

XXXI.

Men often disguise to themselves the secret Displeasure they take at the disadvantageous Censures of others, persuading themselves that they take Offence only at the Injustice of them, and that they are troubled only because others are in the Wrong; but if this were so, the unjust Censures that others suffer under, would move us equally with those that fall on our selves; for there also is the same Violation of Justice, and those that have an Hand in them, are no less in the Wrong than in our Case; but this happening not, it proves plainly that it is Self-Love makes all this stir. It is not the Injustice it self that we are troubled at, but only because it lights on us. Let it be but turned on some other,

other, and our Mind presently changes, and we content our selves to disapprove what is amiss in such Censures, without Concern and without Passion.

## XXXII.

Nevertheless, did we but reason right about it, we should find that these hard Censures do not properly concern us, and that it is Chance, and not Design, that makes us the Marks these Censures let fly at. It cannot be but that they are moved to it by some Appearances, which have come in their way. And tho' those Appearances were too slight whereon to raise such Suspicions, (for we suppose them false) yet 'tis certain, the Persons we complain of, had their Minds disposed to ground them on such Appearances; so that they are produced only by the accidental Conjunction of those Appearances with that Disposition. And altho' it happen'd, that we furnished them with those Appearances, yet it was not because they came from us, but because they met with such a Disposition in them, that they produced that Effect, which would have been the same, had they  
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come from any other ; so that we are not to think that they design us particularly ; but that these People were prepared to judge severely of any one, who should furnish them with such or such Appearances, and it happened by chance that we were the Persons that did so. They chose us not out as the Object on whom to vent their censorious Humour, 'twas only our ill Luck to stand in its way, it was not levelled directly at us ; but as a Stone, thrown up at random in the Air, which falls upon a Man's Head, not because it chose him for a Mark, or purposely meant Mischief to such a Person ; but only because he stood in the Place where the Tendency of its own natural Motion carried it.

XXXIII.

No Body resents it as a particular Provocation, if he be robb'd of his Money by High-way-Men, that lay at catch on the Road for all Passengers : This we take not for an Affront or Indignity ; because we are satisfied they did not lie in wait purposely for us ; but meant to get what they could of all indifferently that fell into their Hands.

Hands. The Cenſorious as well as High-way-Man ſets on all that come in his way, without Choice, without Diſtinction. This raſh Humour lays hold on any ſlight Appearance, and flies out upon every little Suſpicion; when therefore, having furniſhed it with Appearances, we find it meddling with us, there is no more Reason we ſhould be moved or put out of Humour at it, than there is that we ſhould have a Pique at Robbers, who, having a Deſign to riſe all the World, made bold with us, becauſe we came in their Way.

## XXXIV.

Befides, they muſt be ridiculousſly overweening, who will take pet at every cenſorious Diſcourſe that paſſes of them; 'tis the common Lot of Mankind, and he muſt be very ignorant of the World, who thinks he can ſcape them. Princes in this Point are not privileged; Men rail at them in their Ante-Chambres, and their very Servants ſit in Judgment on them. Nothing ſo ordinary as to talk liberally of the Faults of our Friends, and to think it becomes us to be free in  
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the Censure of them. There are Occasions wherein it may be done innocently. However it be, this is most certain, the World is in Possession of this Liberty of talking, and Custom authorizes every one to arraign the Absent; we may therefore make account, that we are not the only Persons excepted out of this general Law, and that there are People who discourse freely of us, and charge us with Faults, whether we are really guilty of them or no. He must needs be ridiculously vain, who would persuade himself that he alone, of all the World, was excused. So that if such Discourses can disquiet us, we must resolve never to be at rest; for there is not a Moment wherein we ought not to conclude for certain, that others either do, or at least have talked of us very little to our liking; but since to be in a continual Vexation would be too troublesome, we think fit to favour our selves without any Reason, and are content these Censures should put us into a Fit of Choler, and ill Humour, only then when they are actually told us, and the Persons discovered who used this Liberty with us; where-



as the Information that is given us, adds little or nothing to the matter. And we have Reason, before we hear any thing of it, to be as fully persuaded that our Faults have been rip'd up, and that some Body or other hath held Discourses of us, such as our Self-love could not away with, as if we had already Notice of it. That little degree of Certainty, which a Talebearer brings us, should that have so great Power on us, to change our Humour so much from what it was before? If therefore this Resentment be reasonable, we ought always to be in Passion: Or rather, because it is unreasonable, we ought never to be moved at all; but to enjoy a perfect Quiet of Mind, as we do, when we cannot but know that there are those in the World who speak Ill of us. And to be shaken and discomposed, when we are told only what we knew before, is arrant ridiculous, childishness; so that on which Side soever we look on this Sensibility, which we shew in such Occasions, we shall find it directly opposite to Justice and Reason.

## XXXV.

When we desire the good Will of Men, and are troubled at their Hatred, because of the Influence those Affections may have on our temporal Concerns; this is not properly Vanity or Rancour, but 'tis Hope, Fear, or Interest; and so considered, they are not the Business we have at present in hand; but we are here considering the Emotions raised in our Minds, by the Love or Hatred it self, which Men bear towards us. These of themselves being but too apt to cause Disorders there; for as the Esteem we have for our selves, is join'd with an entire tender Affection, we are not content that others should barely think well of us; we desire also that they should love us, and their Esteem doth by no Means satisfy us, if it stop short of Affection. Hence it comes to pass, that nothing doth more vex, nothing galls us more to the quick, than the Marks of Aversion which any one shews us. These Thoughts, though they naturally rise in us, are nevertheless unjust, and it is our Duty to

oppose and subdue them. And the same Considerations we have made use of, to take off our Affections from the Esteem of Men, will serve also to this Purpose.

## XXXVI.

'Tis an unreasonable thing to demand of Men their Affection; since we are not at all amiable. And it is unjust to expect they should love us for the Ill we have in us, or the Good we have not. This can spring from nothing but Blindness, and a wilful Ignorance of our own Imperfections. A Woman covered with Sores and Ulcers, would think it enough that Men did not abhor her Sight, and abandon her Company; and would not certainly be so ridiculous as to take it amiss, that she was not esteem'd beautiful and lovely. We should think no otherwise of our selves, did we but well consider the Condition we are in, which we should easily perceive, did we not blindfold our own Eyes.

## XXXVII.

He who knows that he deserves all the Creatures should rise up against him, has he Reason to expect they should fall in Love with him? So that instead of claiming the good Will of Men as our due, and looking on their Aversion as an Injury done us, we ought, on the contrary, to look on their Aversion as that which of right belongs to us, and their Affection as a Favour we deserve not.

## XXXVIII.

But if, generally speaking, it be unjust to think we deserve the Love of others, it is much more so to go about to compel Mens Affections, and to quarrel with those who love us not. Nothing so free as Love, nothing so averse to Compulsion; Reproaches and Complaints never prevail on it. It is perhaps our own Fault that we are not beloved; or perhaps, 'tis the ill Nature of others; but be it as it will, this is certain, Mens Hearts are not to be taken by Storm, and we go the

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wrong

wrong way to gain them, when we would force our selves into their Affection.

## XXXIX.

Aversion springs from that contrariety which one finds between his own Disposition and that which he observes in another. And this contrariety no sooner appears in any one, but the Antipathy begins to work ; whenever therefore it happens that we either really have those Qualities which disgust and give Aversion to others, or else turn that Side towards them which gives them Occasion to fancy such Qualities in us ; we are not at all to wonder that we find the natural Effect of their Disposition, which would have done the same to any other that it doth to us. So that it is not us properly that they hate, but any Man in general, who hath such kind of Qualities as give them Offence.

## XL.

Men hate in general the Selfish and Covetous, the Proud and Presumptuous ;



ous; and we in particular being thought to be such, 'tis no Wonder if this Hatred fasten on us. What is it then in such a Case that we take amiss? Is it that Aversion which Men have generally to those Qualities? that in some Respects is just and allowable; for he that hath those Faults, deserves little to be beloved. Is it the Opinion that we are guilty of them? But that is grounded upon some Appearances, which howsoever slight in themselves, were yet sufficient to work upon the Minds of those who observed them; we may then complain of their Weakness, but have no Reason to accuse them of Injustice.

## XLI.

When Men love us, it is not properly us, but for the most part something else that they love. They fantasie us other than we are, and so fall in Love with us; and painting us in their Imaginations with good Qualities, which we have not, and without the ill ones that we have, place their Affection on a thing very different from us. In their Hatred they do just

the same, the Good that is in us they see not, and there comes in view nothing but what is ill ; but in truth, we are neither one nor t'other ; we are not the Person either wholly without Faults, or utterly void of all good Qualities. 'Tis not us then, 'tis an Idea, a Phantome of their own making, which they follow or fly from. And we are much in the Wrong, when we are concerned either for their Love or their Hatred.

## XLII.

But suppose they mistake us not, and that their Love and Hatred be in truth aimed at us, in our own Shapes, just such as really we are, what Good or Harm can they do us ? They are but the transient painting of a Cloud, the bright or dark Side of a Vapour, that the least Breath dissipates, and that of it self vanishes. Men have not Steadiness enough to stick long to any thing. And if their Affections should, by Miracle, prove constant, they are not able to make us happy or miserable ; they are things wholly separate from us, and have

have not the least Influence upon our Condition, at least if our Minds keep off, and close not with them, and place them not by a wrong Apprehension amongst our Good or Evil. Let all the Creatures join their whole Stock of Affection, let them bestow it on us with all the Warmth, all the Tenderneſs imaginable. All this cannot add the leaſt degree of Happineſs either to our Souls or Bodies; if our Minds are taken up with it, Vanity will follow, and they will grow the worſe for it. On the other Side, let all Mankind unite thir Hatred againſt us, they cannot thereby deprive us of the leaſt real Good, *i. e.* the Good of our Souls. The Love and Hatred of the Creatures being then ſo little able to help or hurt us, this Conſideration alone is enough to render them very indifferent to us.

## XLIII.

How free would he live, who valued not the Love or Hatred of Men; but neither deſiring the one, nor fearing the other, did yet, upon another Principle, all thoſe things which might

deserve their Affection? who did them all the Service he could without Expectation of a Return, no, not so much as that of their Good-Will; and acquitted himself as he ought towards them in all Parts of his Duty, without regarding their Disposition and Carriage towards him; who does Men all the Good he can, for God's sake; keeps his Eye fixed on that Motive, and in his Proceedings with others, governs himself steadily by that unerring and unchangeable Rule, the Will of his Maker, and the Obedience he owes him; not taking up with these insipid, empty Considerations of the Creatures, which cannot but render his Performances less acceptable to his Creator. Who could forbear to love such a Man as this? and how could any one hate him? By this Means he would shun the Hatred of Men, without fearing it; and certainly gain their Affection, without making it his Business; whereas on the contrary, those, whose great Aim is to be beloved, being impatient of any Neglect, very suspicious and sensible of the least Coldness, do by their Touchiness and captious Humour, usually draw

draw on themselves that Aver<sup>n</sup> which, with so much Concern, they strive to avoid.

## XLIV.

But to be vexed that others treat us with Indifferency, is yet more unreasonable ; for were it in our Power to put into Men what Thoughts of us we pleased, this of all others is the Disposition which the Consideration of our own Interest would make us chuse. Their Love carries Danger with it, is apt to steal away our Hearts, and flatter them to their Ruin : Their Hatred provokes us, and endangers our Charity ; but, their Indifferency is a mean between both, very suitable to our Condition, to our Weakness, and leaves us at Liberty to apply our selves wholly to Almighty God, without turning aside to the Creatures.

## XLV.

The Love of others, is a Force that captivates us, is a Snare that intangles us, not only because our own  
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natural Inclinations gives us up to it ; but also because that Love it self lays on us an Obligation to certain Duties of difficult Performance. Love opens their Hearts to us, which is an Advantage we ought to make use of, for their spiritual Good ; a thing not easie to be done. 'Tis true, 'tis a great Happiness when it lights into Hands that know how to manage it well ; but yet such an one, as we ought not to wish for, as carrying too great Danger with it. The Kindness of others is a thing we commonly rest our selves upon, we are satisfied with, we are afraid to lose, and far from making use of the Affection of those that love us, to bring them nearer to God ; we are often softened by it, and made pliant to their Passions.

## XLVI.

But why is such a one cold to me, when I am not so to him ? Why is he so negligent in my Concerns, when I am so very careful of his ? This is the Language of Self-Love, these the Complaints of weak Minds ; but such as are very unjust, as is easie to shew.

shew. If in loving Men, we have had no other aim but to get an Interest in them, and to make them apply to us, we well deserve to miss that vain Reward. But if in our Application to others, we have proceeded with a better Design, and have loved Men in Obedience to God; does not this carry its own Reward with it? and is it not unjust to demand another? 'Tis true, their Neglect and Indifferency towards us may be a Fault in them; but a Fault which respects God, and not us. It hurts not us, but them; and gives us Reason perhaps to blame them, but none to complain of them. So that all the Displeasure that arises from hence, terminating wholly in our selves, cannot but be vain and unjust.

## XLVII.

Nothing shews more the Decay and utter Extinction of Faith in Christians, than the Displeasure they take up against those who fail in any Part of that Acknowledgment they ought to make them, there being nothing more directly opposite to the Dictates of  
Faith

Faith than this kind of Heart-burning. If they consider, as they should, the Services they do others, they ought to look on them as Favours received from the Hands of God, for which they are indebted to his Goodness; and as Performances, which they have offered up and consecrated to him, and not to the Creatures. They ought to regard the Persons to whom they have done these Services, as those who have procured them this Good, and consequently, that they have received much more from them than they have bestowed on them. They ought to be afraid of receiving their Reward in this World, as the greatest Misery that can befall them, and of losing that of the World to come, which they had not failed of, had they looked to God only in the Performance of those Duties. They ought to acknowledge, that all these Services, such as they are, have a large Mixture of Imperfection in them; so that they are just matter of Humiliation and Repentance. How can one reconcile, with these Dictates of Faith, those angry Thoughts which we feel in our selves, when others fail in any Acknowledgment,

ment, we fancies we have deserved of them? Do they not, on the contrary, discover, that we have taken all this Pains only for the Sake of Men, that we have had our Eyes wholly on them? So that all these Actions, we so much glory in, are but a Robbery committed against God, for which he hath a just Right to punish us.

## XLVIII.

If in the good Turns we have done others, we have had regard only to Men, 'tis well for us that they have proved ingrateful; since this may be a Means to procure us the Mercy of Almighty God. If we have had Regard only to God, 'tis also well for us that Men make us no Returns; because their Acknowledgments and the Sense we may have of them, is, of all other things, the most likely to lessen or wholly deprive us of that Recompence we expect from God. Let us then consider the Gratitude of Men as we please, we shall find it a Benefit to them and an Inconvenience to us, and that we receive far greater Advantages from their Ingratitude. Their  
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Acknowledgments may occasion the Loss of the Rewards of our best Performances, and increase the Punishment of our Misdeeds. But their Ingratitude may be a Means to secure us the Fruit of our good Actions, and to turn away the Wrath of God, which we have deserved by our bad ones.

## XLIX.

No Body would do that Injury to a Prince, who had declared, that he would largely recompence those who served him ; but should take it amiss of any one who should expect a Reward from any other but himself. No Body, I say, would be so rude to such a Prince, as to prefer the Complements and Caresles of his Servants, to the things of value, and substantial Rewards he had Reason to hope from the Master. And yet this we do every Day : Thus we treat the great Sovereign of Heaven and Earth : He promises an everlasting Kingdom to those who exercise Acts of Charity to their Neighbours ; but he would have them rest satisfied with that Reward, and not look for any other. And yet the  
Thoughts



Thoughts of most Men are taken up in examining, whether others keep touch with their Kindness, and make full Payment of what they owe them ; whether those to whom they have done any good Office, have a due Sense of the Obligation, are punctual in their Returns, and careful to express their Acknowledgments in suitable Civilities.

## L.

Were our Thoughts conformable to the Faith we profess, we should be fully persuaded, that as the Occasions of serving others are great Blessings we receive from the Hands of God, so also it is an additional Favour he bestows on us, when he permits Men to overlook our Kindness, and make not the Returns they ought to the Services we do them ; for 'tis not only to give us a Title to an inestimable Treasure ; but to secure us the Possession of it, and put us out of Danger of missing it.

## LI.

## LI.

But our Joy ought to be full, and our Satisfaction compleat, when we have Reason to believe, that those who seem to fail in their Acknowledgments to us, are in themselves Persons very grateful; and that 'tis Ignorance of their Obligation to us, and not want of Gratitude in them, that hath hindered their expressing it; for though it be always really much to our Advantage, whenever others are tardy in their Acknowledgments to us, yet 'tis a thing not to be desired; because commonly 'tis harm to them. But there is nothing in it but very desirable, when it is attended with no ill, either to them or to us, when without being guilty of Ingratitude themselves, they put us not in Danger, by their Returns, which are but the insignificant Acknowledgments of Men, to lose the Recompence we expect from Almighty God.

## LII.

## LII.

'Tis not only unjust, but a very mean thing, to mark with so much Concern the Gratitude of others; and it ought to cover us with Confusion, when we consider for how small a Trifle we forego an eternal Reward. This goodly Acknowledgment, that we so much set our Hearts on, what does it amount to? A Leg, or a Complement, a good Look, or a civil Letter; some such great Purchase as this, is what we prefer to the Acceptance of God, and the Recompence which he promises.

## LIII.

We are often our selves the Cause of those Miscarriages we complain of in others. 'Tis our Carriage to them stifles their Gratitude to us; so that when we find Men cooler in their Acknowledgments to us than they are to others, we have Reason always to suspect, that there is something in us which knows not how to deserve their Thanks; but be it as it will, our,  
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or their Fault, it is still very great Folly to take it amiss when others fail to pay us what we plainly see cannot but be dangerous to us to receive.

## LIII.

Trust and Confidence being Marks of Friendship and Affection, shewing the Esteem that others have of our Ability and Discretion, 'tis no Wonder if they gratifie our Self-love. And on the contrary, Reservedness in those who, we think, ought to have good Thoughts of us, is very apt to offend and disease us; but if we would advise with Reason, or if Religion had any Influence upon us, we should be of another Mind: And they would fully convince us, that the Reservedness of others towards us is more to our Advantage than their Openness.

## LIV.

Were there no other Reason but the Good it is to us, to miss those little Satisfactions which flatter and increase our Vanity; they were enough to content those who have any value  
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for Humility and Mortification, and who perhaps often failing of others, ought, with Joy, to embrace those Occasions of an internal Mortification, which is like to be the more effectual ; because it goes to the Root, and strikes directly at our very Passions themselves. But there are many others as material and important as that, some whereof are these following.

## LVI.

A Confident is very little distant from a Counsellor ; he that opens his Mind to us, does, as it were, ask our Advice : And we cannot afterwards talk with him, without interesting our selves in his Conduct ; for our Discourse must necessarily have a Respect to those Thoughts, those Passions he has discovered to us, and cannot chuse but make Impression on a Mind which, by its very laying it self open, was prepared to receive it. It is not a little dangerous to be bound to talk on such Occasions. And there needs a great deal of Skill to do it with Advantage to one's self and others. Communications of this Nature commonly  
serve



serve only to flatter Men in their Passions, and countenance them in the Opinion of their own Conduct; for most People being naturally loath to disease others, they take Care only to satisfy the Desire of Approbation, which, when they open their Hearts, discovers it self at the Bottom of them.

## LVII.

The Thoughts which others pour into our Breasts usually give ours the same Tincture; we are insensibly wrought into their Passions, and partake of their Corruptions; we join with them in the Prejudices they have. And being persuaded, by the Affection they bear us, that they have no Design to deceive us; we give our selves up to their Opinions, without considering that they often deceive themselves in the first Place. And so by this Means, we receive from them wrong Impressions, and transplant into our selves all their Mistakes.

## LVIII.

## LVIII.

By this Intimacy we come to be loaden with Secrets, which must be kept close, a Burden, which the Fear of having them discover'd makes sit continually uneasie upon us. And whereas it often happens, that they come to be known by a Thousand Ways, he that was intrusted with them, is suspected for the Discovery.

## LIX.

Others communicating their Thoughts to us, is a kind of Obligation that we should be as open to them on our Side. If we do otherwise, it will be taken amiss; whereas had they been more reserved towards us, they would not at all have wondered at our being so to them. This Obligation carries often with it great Inconveniencies; for if you keep upon the Reserve, it gives Offence, and you dissatisfie them. If you unlock your Breast, you prejudice them, and expose them to a Temptation that may be dangerous both to them and you.

LX.

## LX.

Add to this, how little real Advantage there is in the vain Satisfaction of being another's Confident. How unreasonable it is to expect, that any one should lay open to us his Breast, the Place where every one hath the Privilege of Privacy and Freedom. And lastly, how just it is to conclude, that if others are not communicative to us, there is something in us that ties up their Tongues. These things considered, cannot but make us blame our Dissatisfaction at the Reservedness of others, and blush for our being guilty of so much Weakness.

## LXI.

Civility gains upon us, and Incivility loses us; but they have on us these different Effects, only because we are altogether vain, unjust, and carnal; there is very little Civility which Reason, upon Considerations purely humane, can allow us to have any Value for; because there is very little of it that is sincere, little without

out Design. 'Tis commonly bare Lip-labour, a playing with Words that have no Meaning: And Vanity, sporting it self in fine Language, that has nothing to do with Truth or Reality. To be pleased with this, is to be pleased with being cheated. They who make Shew of most Civility to our Face, being often the first to laugh at us sa soon as our Backs are turned.

LXII.

The Civility which is most sincere, most in earnest, is always useless, yea, and dangerous too. At best, 'tis but a Mark of Love and Esteem, and so presents us with those two things which naturally sooth our Self-Love, and corrupt our Affections.

LXIII.

All the Civilities we receive, engage us in troublesome Observances; for the World gives nothing for nothing. Those that pay us Civilities, expect the same from us again. 'Tis a sort of Commerce, establish'd and

regulated by Self-Love, which being supreme Judge in the Case, obliges both Sides to equal and punctual Returns, and allows us to complain when others fail in their Part of the Performance.

## LXIV.

The Civilities we receive commonly blind our Judgments, and incline us to prefer those that are civil, to others who have more real Worth, and do better deserve our Esteem.

## LXV.

Civility hath but little Good in it, and Incivility but little Harm. 'Tis great Weakness then to be moved at it. 'Tis often nothing but want of Application, and this Carelessness comes frequently from nothing else but the Minds being taken up with Thoughts of greater Importance. They who are the least punctual in formal Civilities are those commonly who have a Resolution of doing us the most real Service.

## LXVI.



## LXVI.

But suppose, if you please, that it proceeds from Indifferency and Want of Affection; what Good, I pray, do we lose; or what Harm comes to us by it? And how can we hope, that God should forgive us those infinite Debts, which we are accountable to him for, by the inviolable Law of his eternal Justice; if we will not forgive our Brother a little Omission of Ceremony or Civility, which yet he owes us not, but by an Establishment made by Men one amongst another?

## LXVII.

Not but that God authorizes those Establishments; so that we owe one another Civility even by the Law of God, as hath been shewn in the former Part of this Discourse; but it is a sort of Debt which we are never to demand; because 'tis not a thing due to our Merit, but an Allowance made to our Weakness. Now to be weak, is what we ought not to be, and 'tis our Fault if we are so: And our

Duty requiring us to remedy it all we can, takes from us all Right of complaining that others have not Consideration enough for it.

## LXVIII.

To preserve Peace of Mind within our selves, and Peace in our Conversation with others, it is not enough not to give Offence, nor to forbear also exacting from others Love, Esteem, Gratitude, Intimacy, or Civility; but we must likewise arm our selves with Patience, Proof against their Humours; for it being impossible to make all those, with whom we have to do, honest, fair, well-conditioned, faultless Men, we are never to hope for Peace, if we seek it that Way.

## LXIX.

In our Conversation then in the World, we must expect to meet with troublesome Humours, Men who will be angry without a Cause, and peevish to no Purpose: Men of an haughty Carriage, and a surly Stiffness; who

who will take every thing the wrong Way, who will neither speak nor hear Reason; some have too much Choler, and others too much Phlegm; some are full of Contradiction, and others impatient of it. There are Envious and Insolent, and some so full of themselves, that they cannot endure any Discourse that doth not tend to their Commendation, and serve to set out their Merits. And to conclude, we shall meet with abundance of People that make no Difference betwixt Right and Wrong, that look on Injustice as establish'd by an eternal Law, and who believe all things to be their due, and never considering how they themselves treat others, require of them extraordinary Compliance. What Hopes is there then of living at quiet, if these Miscarriages can shake and unsettle us; if our Minds are disturbed and discomposed upon every such Occasion? We ought then to bear with them patiently, and, without Vexation, we must prepare ourselves for them, and make them familiar to us, if we will, as the Scripture saith, *possess our Souls*, and not fly out every Moment into Fits of Im-  
M 3 patience,

patience, and run our selves into all those Inconveniencies which have been mentioned. But such a Patience is no common Virtue.

## LXX.

That which is strange in the Case is, that being a Virtue so hard to practise, and yet of so great Advantage, Men take so little Care to get it. They learn to break Horses, and set them firm, in spite of all their Bounds and curveting. But if Men come to shock them ever so little, they have no Government of themselves, nor Steadiness; they are presently disordered and over-turned, and they are carried away with the same violent Motion that runs others upon them.

## LXXI.

To deaden the Sense of this deep Impression, which the Miscarriages of others make upon us: It may not perhaps be amiss to make often such Reflections as these: Miscarriages being so frequent in the World, 'tis a great Folly to be startled at them;  
not

not to look for them. Men are made up of a Mixture of good and bad Qualities; they help and they hurt us, and so we must take them; if we will enjoy the Advantages of Society with them, we must patiently bear with the Inconveniencies we meet with in it.

LXXII.

There is nothing more absurd than to be unreasonable, because another Man is so; to prejudice one's self, because another is in the Humour to do himself Harm; and to partake in the Follies of others, as if we had not every one Failings and Miseries enough of our own; but had need to furnish our selves from abroad, and add to our Stock the Faults of all those that come near us.

LXXIII.

The Faults of others, how great soever, concern only those that have them; they do us no Harm, unless we voluntarily take the Impression; they are rather Objects of Pity than Anger.



get. And we have as little Reason to be displeased with the Infirmities of Mens Minds, as the Diseases of their Bodies ; there is also this odds in the Case, that the Diseases of their Bodies communicate themselves, and often infect ours, whether we will or no ; whereas the Maladies of their Minds are not catching without our own Consent.

## LXXIV.

We must not only look on the Failings of others as Diseases, but Diseases that we are as liable to as they: There are no Faults in others whereof we too are not likewise capable. And though we are not guilty of the very same, yet perhaps we have those that are greater ; so that not having any Reason to value our selves above others, we find that we have none neither to take Offence at them.

## LXXV.

If we look on others Failings calmly, and with a charitable Eye, they may prove Instructions to us, by so much

much the more effectual, as not being disquieted by our Self-love, we may the better perceive their true Deformity. Here we may observe how the Passions cross those Ends they so hotly pursue. One storms and puts himself in Choler to gain Belief, and he is the less hearken'd to : Another takes it amiss, that he has not Respect enough paid him, and thereby lessens the Esteem others had for him. Some would recommend themselves to the Affections of others, by being liberal in their own Praise ; and thereby commonly render themselves less acceptable. This may discover to us how much our Passions blind us, if we but consider that these Inconveniences they run us into, which are so visible to By-standers, are usually unheeded by us our selves ; and being odious and ridiculous to all the World, we alone perceive it not, being so wholly taken up with those Objects our Passions have set us a longing after.

## LX XVI.

This may serve also, either to put us in Mind of those Faults which the same kind of Passions formerly engaged us in, or of those which we yet retain, in Obedience to other Passions no less dangerous, and wherewith we are equally blinded. And thus coming to a profitable Sense of our own Weakness, we shall the easier, without Resentment, pass by that of others.

## LXXVII.

To conclude, let us remember, that to be vexed at the Miscarriages or Humours of others, is as great a Peice of Folly, and much what the same as to be angry at ill Weather, or be out of Patience, because 'tis too hot, or too cold ; for our Anger is as well able to change the Wind and Weather, as Men and their Manners. All the odds is, that the Weather grows not worse for our quarrelling with it ; whereas, having to do with Men, our Peevishness increases their Passion, our  
Anger

Anger raises the Storm, and they become the more rough and intractable.

LXXVIII.

Thus I have given you here a slight Draught of the Means that may be useful to preserve our internal Peace, which may all be included in this one Verse of the Psalms, *There is much Peace to them, who love thy Law; and they are not offended.* For if we love nothing but the Law of God, we shall be very cautious of offending others: We shall never provoke them with foolish Disputes, and their Faults will never be an Occasion of Trouble, Vexation, Anger, or Scandal to us; since they will not hinder us from observing this Law. This Law requires us to bear with them, and 'tis the Rule of Patience and Long-suffering, which the Apostle calls the Law of Christ. *Bear one anothers Burdens,* (says he) *and observe the Law of Christ.* We must acknowledge therefore that all our Impatience, all our Peevishness comes from this; that we do not sufficiently love this Law of Charity, that we have

have other Designs than that of obeying Almighty God ; that we seek our Satisfaction, Content and Reputation amongst the Creatures ; but the Way to establish the Mind in a sure, unmoveable Peace, is, wholly to possess it with the Love of God ; so that it may regard nothing but Him, desire to please him alone, and place all its Happiness only in obeying his Will.



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